

COLLEGE ENGLISH

VOLUME 21

APRIL 1960

NUMBER 7

Composition Issue

Rice and Kitzhaber on the Abolition of Freshman English •
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For Contributors

Because the present editor will retire in June to devote himself to other duties, and because there is ample material already accepted to fill the issues through May, contributors may either hold their manuscripts until a new editor's name and address are announced here, or continue to submit manuscripts, which will be stored and then transmitted. We regret this necessary delay in procedure.

For Readers

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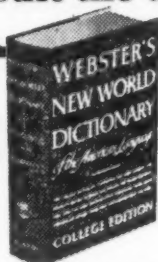
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A Proposal for the Abolition of Freshman English, As It Is Now Commonly Taught, from the College Curriculum

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It may appear that any proposal for the removal of Freshman English, as it is now commonly taught, from the curricula of colleges and universities should begin with some definition or description of the subject under discussion. But a simple, exact description is difficult to provide, since more than fifty-seven varieties of Freshman English are currently being offered; and perhaps in a College Section meeting of the National Council it is necessary to say no more than that Freshman English is the course that the CCCC is principally concerned about, the course for which scores of handbooks, workbooks, and anthologies have been compiled. It is the course in composition or communication arts regularly required of practically all students during the first college year. It may include some literature, it may make an attempt to provide general education, but its primary purposes are usually stated to be the improvement of the thinking processes of the freshman as concomitant to his improvement in the skills of listening, speaking, and—more especially—reading and writing.

There are, of course, already some colleges and universities in which no such course is now being taught. Most teachers know about General Education A at Harvard, about Freshman courses in other ivy-

league colleges which do not fit the usual pattern, and about experimental courses elsewhere. But Freshman English of the kind to which I have referred grows and expands much more rapidly than it diminishes. It is my belief that this growth is undesirable for many reasons—some academic, some economic; that Freshman English, as commonly taught, is not essential to the wholesome life of institutions of higher learning in this country. Accordingly I recommend that it be eliminated from the college curriculum.

Some of the reasons for abolishing Freshman English are these:

(1) Since acceptable work of college grade should require a reasonably good command of communication skills, students who enter institutions of higher learning without this competence waste their time and the time of their teachers.

(2) If good habits of reading, writing, and speaking have not been inculcated before the student is of college age, it is unlikely that he will be greatly benefited by two semesters of Freshman English. Something can be accomplished, of course; but no miracle will be wrought, since it is late for elementary instruction. If the elements have been mastered, the improvement of skill will depend partly on the student's maturation, partly upon practice in expres-

sions in situations not artificially contrived but stimulating to the writer or speaker because he is eager to communicate information and ideas about which he feels a special concern.

(3) Many of the students in the present Freshman English courses are ill-motivated. The subject is required, not an elective. They are often aware that they are not under the instruction of the most experienced and capable of the Department's teachers. They fail to discover the connection between the purposes and the materials of the course, feel that it has too indeterminate a subject-matter, that they are writing in a vacuum, or that they are repeating high school exercises. When such circumstances exist, their time can be put in to better advantage elsewhere.

(4) Freshman English, though it is relatively inexpensive on a cost-per-credit-hour basis, is, in the aggregate, a major item in the English Department's budget. If it can be eliminated (not simply replaced) the savings will be considerable. And as the pressure of numbers increases, as economic barriers grow higher, colleges and universities must plan to use their staffs and facilities more and more efficiently for higher education, not for elementary instruction. The elimination of Freshman English will encourage the current movement to fix responsibility for instruction in elementary subjects—language courses, mathematics up to the calculus, etc., upon the high schools; and here the responsibility must increasingly reside.

(5) The elimination of Freshman English will improve the situation in which college teachers find themselves. Since Freshman courses now account (in sum) for at least half the man-hours devoted to students in departments of English, their abolition will result in the diversion of teaching energies into different, and more attractive, channels. Though there are thousands of expert, devoted, and effective teachers of the present Freshman English course, few wish to make this activity their principal concern. And since a large part of the teaching is done by beginners whose interests lie elsewhere (in the completion of graduate studies, in developing "courses of their own"), and who are neither psy-

chologically nor professionally prepared for the task which they have undertaken, the removal of the course will reduce supervisory problems and improve morale.

Some observations are certainly called for on all these points. It may reasonably be objected that it is one thing to maintain that competence in reading and composition should be gained in the high school, but quite another to insure that it be done. Here, in answer, it is sufficient to remark that there need be no doubt that the job can be done (under the right conditions), and that the temper of the public, which pays the taxes necessary to support secondary education, is inclining toward an insistence that the high school accomplish such tasks. There is, to be sure, the difficulty that some states require that tax-supported universities admit all high school graduates who apply, whatever their degree of preparation. As long as this situation continues, it is claimed, there will be a need for Freshman English and sub-Freshman English. The appropriate comments here seem to be (a) that this arrangement is educationally unsound, too expensive to be continued, and vulnerable to determined attack, and (b) that English departments should in any case cease to perform the function of admissions offices (as they now do by their passing and failing of Freshmen), and insist that the setting of standards of competence be made a college matter. The abolition of sub-Freshman English can logically be followed by the abolition of Freshman English.

It may be argued, of course, that if Freshman English courses are not now as valuable as they should be, they can be improved. Probably this is true; but in fact they will not be improved along the lines now followed without an enormous effort to train college teachers for Freshman work, the employment of many more experienced (and more expensive) instructors, and the provision of attractive academic careers in the field—all developments long sought, but not probable on a large scale. That Freshman English should not be abandoned simply because it is not popular must certainly be acknowledged—but only if it is agreed that its purposes cannot be achieved in other ways. That they can be better achieved in other ways

it is the purpose of the argument which follows to show.

First, however, it is necessary to deal with a matter of undeniable importance to departments of English. Freshman English courses, being required, bring large enrollments—and numbers mean power. Small, expensive graduate seminars or honors classes are often more easily financed if they can be balanced against large inexpensive courses than they could be if no such courses existed; and this is only one of the advantages of size. Moreover, in many universities, the instruction of Freshmen provides a principal means of subsidizing scores of graduate students, whose numbers justify a large graduate program. To close out the Freshman course might mean the cutting down of graduate enrollments; and in this day of teacher shortages, such an action cannot seriously be contemplated. These considerations cannot simply be brushed aside; but it may be supposed that since many other departments manage very well without a required Freshman course, the department of English, having made some uncomfortable but not really difficult adjustments, could follow their example. If Freshman English were abolished, somewhat fewer teachers would be needed; but it ought still to be possible to use many graduate students to assist with instructional tasks more congenial to them than composition, and for which their preparation would be more appropriate.

Other difficulties must still be confronted, however. College faculties will not welcome the abolition of Freshman English, because with it must go the comfortable assumption that the English department is solely responsible for good writing. This assumption is certainly false; but it has been encouraged by the incautious willingness of English departments to sponsor and direct the required course. A change in attitude may be hard to effect, but there is evidence that this change can be managed. It must be managed, as later paragraphs will attempt to show, if good standards in reading and writing are to be maintained.

Opposition to the abandonment of Freshman English by the colleges may be expected from many administrators and teachers in the secondary schools. Their

position is understandable. For a generation they have been engaged in a large, and generally successful, social service enterprise, and have transferred many of their traditional teaching duties to other agencies—especially the college. In a time of increasing technological unemployment, growing juvenile delinquency, and intensified needs for counseling, psychiatric care, and similar services, the community will probably demand that the school continue to concern itself with recreation, health, guidance, vocational courses, home and family living, and like matters. But there is a growing sense that the school must do more on the academic side, too. Many curricula are being reshaped. Advanced Placement courses are growing in popularity. The two- or three-track systems now being tried, though they may not be perfect, likewise give evidence that the college-bound student is likely to be helped and encouraged to achieve more than has lately been expected of him.

What will be expected of him by the college which has eliminated the kind of Freshman English course which is now being taught? Obviously such a college will expect a level of proficiency in reading which will insure that he can understand and analyze prose of moderate difficulty, as well as poetry of at least the simpler sort; and that his writing in expository and argumentative essays exhibits no gross errors. This proficiency will be tested by examination—preferably by an examination developed and administered over a wide area by the CEEB or some similar agency. If, as an applicant for admission to an institution of higher learning, he falls below the standard which that institution sets in English, he will be refused, though of course not prohibited from trying again to qualify.

Reading and writing skills of an adequate kind are not now so unusual among college freshmen as to discourage the expectation that they can be widely achieved. Such skills are certainly mastered by pupils in the secondary schools of Europe. They will not be attained in the United States, however, without a powerful effort on the part of secondary schools and colleges alike. They will not be taught, that is, as long as a large proportion of high school

teachers of English come to their tasks insufficiently prepared, and as long as most high school teachers are heavily overburdened, with too many classes, each containing too many pupils, and with taxing extra-curricular assignments to boot. It is the professional obligation of the NCTE and of other teachers' organizations to make the representations required to bring home to school administrators, PTA groups, citizens' committees, and so on, the importance of improving the qualifications of teachers of English and of making their loads tolerable.

In this effort colleges and universities must play an active part. This they can do only if members of their English departments interest themselves actively in the preparation and professional welfare of teachers. That they, like their colleagues in other fields, have been backward in this matter is obvious enough; but the time has certainly come for improvement. The serious attention given to the Master of Arts in Teaching programs in a number of universities is a good sign, while the TEPS conferences sponsored by the NEA have had good effects in bringing together representatives of schools of education with those from subject-matter areas—for, like the current debates over certification, these meetings have focused attention upon the importance of high standards of preparation in the subjects which a teacher professes to be able to teach. What is needed now is a widespread endeavor to exploit these gains, largely through the general introduction of improved teacher training programs.

It is, indeed, in the education and training of secondary school teachers, rather than through the enlargement of Freshman English programs, that the hope for an improvement in communication skills lies. In discharging this obligation, departments of English must persuade men and women of first-rate ability to undertake the task. They must forge alliances with schools of Education, in order to avail themselves of the talents and opportunities which exist there, must participate in the offering of courses in methods, and must aid in the supervision of practice teaching. Members of English departments must go into the high schools, acquaint themselves with the

conditions under which teachers are working, and give practical advice toward the solution of real classroom problems. And they must reach agreements, through direct contact with secondary educators and by constant consultation with their colleagues in the schools, as to the standards which college-bound students can reasonably be expected to meet.

There is much beyond this to be attempted; among many possibilities, these at least can be mentioned:

(1) Summer programs for the upgrading of insufficiently prepared teachers of English. These teachers must, in order to carry out their assignments adequately, not only take more courses of the conventional kind, but also receive special instruction in the effective techniques of teaching composition and literature in special workshops and seminars.

(2) Summer programs designed especially for teachers of Advanced Placement programs.

(3) Internships for high school teachers in the Freshman English programs now being taught, so that they may, by working alongside college teachers, come in contact with the best methods currently in use.

(4) Seminars and workshops offered in the field, with demonstration lessons in high school classrooms followed by meetings of teachers to discuss methods and materials, to improve existing course plans and syllabi, and to familiarize all concerned with the levels of proficiency expected.

(5) The strengthening of undergraduate English programs now prescribed for prospective teachers, and the improvement of their professional preparation through cooperation with schools of Education.

All these activities, and others of a similar character, are now actually being carried on; but they are not yet well supported, and far too few members of English staffs have become really expert in them. Some of the talent which has been expended in the development of Freshman English courses can, however, profitably be directed to such work. It does not, admittedly, promise more professional advancement or prestige than Freshman English now provides, but it offers the best

means of employing the energies of college teachers who are really concerned about the improvement of communication skills.

The task of convincing college faculties that English departments cannot properly accept the entire, or even the principal, responsibility for developing an expert command of what is generally called English is a large one. The complaint is often heard that Freshman Composition must be incapably taught because students who have received satisfactory grades in the course fail, as seniors or graduates, to write accurately and effectively. It is certainly true, however, that the proficiency desired can be gained only by constant and disciplined practise; and if this condition is not met in a majority of courses (not in one or two only), no great success is to be expected. It follows that if there is a general desire for improvement, there must be an effort, in many quarters, to insure it. Teachers of every subject from anthropology to zoology must assist.

That they can assist, if their professions of concern are heartfelt, is obvious. And perhaps only a sentence or two need be devoted to the possibility that they may not be in earnest—or, to put the case more charitably, that new forms of communication—the graph, the picture on the page or on the screen, the voice, “live” or recorded, and other media (e.g., the coded tape), are now equal to, or of greater importance than, the written word. It is not necessary to go as far as Professor Marshall McLuhan to acknowledge that to some degree this is true; and the speculation that expert writers will become a special class, skilled in translating the ideas of technologists into a *lingua franca*, is not absurd. But for the present, at least, the familiar communication arts are necessary, and all educated persons must cultivate them.

And as the teacher of science should not say to his pupil, “Your astronomy is good, but your mathematics bad,” the two being intimately related, so the teacher of philosophy or history should not say, “Your argument is good, but ill-expressed,” for the expression is intimately bound up with the argument. And certainly the majority of college teachers are competent to help undergraduates improve their expression. That the task is arduous, and that many

recoil from it, is unfortunately true. This reluctance must be overcome.

It may be met in several ways. The conversion of senior professors to the view that they are responsible for correcting the English of their students may be impossible; but at least junior teachers, assistants, and paper-graders—who perform a considerable part of the work of essay reading—can be assigned the task, and, if their powers are not sufficient, can be trained by English departments to make the proper annotations and comments. That incidental benefits would accrue from such a practise is obvious—young social scientists, historians, and philosophers would learn to write better English, since the best way to learn is to teach; and they would develop habits of dealing with the English of their students which would, as the years went by, improve the whole academic program. It is too much to expect that a complete reform can be speedily effected in this way; but progress toward implementing it would be in the right direction. For the goal must be acceptance of responsibility for better English by the whole college community. Nothing less will prove genuinely efficacious in the end.

It will be asked what will replace the Freshman English now taught if, by various expedients, it proves possible to get along without it. The answer must be firm and emphatic: Nothing. College requirements should simply be reduced by whatever number of hours Freshman English now absorbs. And perhaps it is not vain to hope that if similar policies are applied in other fields, if admissions standards generally are raised, so that the college student's first year is not devoted almost exclusively to such studies as composition, elementary French, and algebra, the curriculum leading to the bachelor's degree can be shortened to three years without loss, and present college facilities thus be made accessible to a larger number of students.

There need be no question, of course, as to the propriety of offering some English course to first-year students. But the English course designed for Freshmen should be (as some now are) a course in the subjects which the English Department is best prepared to teach—language and literature. It should be elective, or should have

an acknowledged place in a program of general studies. Like other courses, it should make considerable demands upon the student's skill in reading and writing. Its purposes, like its subject matter, should be clearly defined, and clearly within the competence of those assigned to teach it. Such courses can be designed so as to employ the energies of many of those graduate students now holding appointments as teaching assistants. That they would apply themselves under such circumstances more willingly and more capably than they apply themselves to the tasks now assigned them is sure—and it is even probable that they would prove, under these conditions, more effective in teaching writing than they now are.

If a serious shortage of teachers occurs, as the experts predict it will, there will be other tasks which teaching assistants can usefully perform—in connection with large lecture courses, or in conjunction with mechanical aids. In free-reading programs they might give tutorial or preceptorial direction to groups of students. There need be no fear lest, with the abandonment of the present Freshman English course, there will be too few places for beginners to get internship training—and there may even be a good chance that more attention will be given to their guidance and supervision, with a consequent gain to students, if they are working with senior staff members in fields of special interest to the latter.

By way of summary, the proposals outlined above will require, for their effective implementation, the following:

(1) Improvements in the professional environment of the high school English teacher which will permit and encourage superior classroom performance and increased attention to college-bound students.

(2) The improvement, through better teacher-training programs and more intelligent certification procedures, of the qualifications of high school English teachers.

(3) Cooperative efforts by college and university departments of English, school administrators, Schools of Education, and teachers themselves, directed toward (a) the further training of those now insufficiently prepared, (b) a general increase in

competence, and (c) the development of better methods and curricula.

(4) The widespread use of proficiency tests in English as a means of determining which applicants are, and which are not, ready for college work.

(5) The substitution of substantial writing requirements in many freshman and sophomore college courses for the present Freshman Composition requirement.

(6) The use of proficiency tests for college juniors to insure that all those concerned will emphasize the importance of communication skills during the first two college years, and that students proceeding to concentration or "major" programs will have a reasonable competence in these techniques.

(7) The relegation of necessary corrective disciplines in English to noncredit, extra-fee courses.

(8) The delegation of responsibility for maintaining satisfactory standards in English to a college committee or other college agency.

(9) The development of Freshman English courses which have as their subject matter language and literature.

It is obvious that in these proposals there is little that is new. The chief reason for bringing together many familiar recommendations on this occasion is that the moment is propitious for a concerted effort to bring about an improvement in the English program. The public is aroused, there is a demand for greater effectiveness in education at all levels, money is available for experimentation, the pressures of a growing population and of economic stringency force a reconsideration of current practices. Impatience with lax and wasteful programs makes possible reforms which could not have been introduced ten or twenty years ago.

If a change is to be made, however, it must be attempted on a wide, not a narrow, front. The fate of good innovations which are introduced sporadically and at widely scattered institutions has shown how great an effort must be expended if academic inertia is to be overcome. The decision of a strong regional group of colleges and universities to insist on higher standards of achievement in English would be sufficient,

however, to modify the pattern of teaching in a large group of secondary schools; and when this was accomplished, there would be a good chance that improvement would become general. The situation is sufficiently

critical so that if reforms in the teaching of English are not made within the structure of secondary and higher education, there may occur a collapse which will invite action from outside authorities.

Death — or Transfiguration?

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I think that probably no one would want to make an unqualified defense of the present Freshman English course in all its infinite varieties—of its aims, its methods, its content, and its accomplishments. I need not go into detail regarding all its shortcomings, but I will mention a few of the most obvious simply to make it clear that I am aware of them and that I recognize them as defects.

For example: The aims of the course, when we stop to think of them, are surely over-ambitious—to eradicate, in three hours a week for 30 or 35 weeks, habits of thought and expression that have been forming for at least 15 years and to which the student is as closely wedded as he is to his skin; and to fix indelibly a different set of habits from which the student will never afterwards deviate. It is little wonder that we generally fall short of achieving these aims.

Another weakness is the lack of general agreement about course content, so that depending on the prejudices of the teacher, departmental policy (or lack of it), or current fads, the course may center on literature or semantics or logic or "communication skills" or several varieties of grammar or mental stimulation or life adjustment. One result of this uncertainty over proper content is that the course becomes a receptacle for odds and ends of instruction (use of the library, Freshman orientation, research methods) that belong to English no more than they do to other

subjects; and these additions dilute the course.

Most of the textbooks and most of the work of the course, as it is usually constituted, cannot be said even by the most charitably disposed critic to be on the same level of intellectual rigor and maturity as textbooks and classwork in other freshman courses such as chemistry or economics. I am thinking of such stultifying activities as diagramming sentences or doing workbook exercises on the apostrophe or distinguishing between a topic outline and a sentence outline.

Finally, we must generally admit that the course too seldom succeeds in teaching students to write as we want them to. Often we find that students who thought and wrote well when the course began still write and think well when it ends; we have neither helped them nor (presumably) hurt them. Students who were confused thinkers and writers at the first of the course may think and write better at the end; but if they do, it is difficult for us to prove that our instruction has been solely responsible—and in any case, there is too seldom a comforting relationship between the degree of improvement and the quantity of labor expended.

In the face of all this, and exasperated by administrators, by colleagues in other departments, and by the general public, all of whom subject us to a running fire of largely uninformed criticism, we can be forgiven if we are lured by the temptation

to solve the difficulty, as far as we are concerned, in a simple and dramatic way: abolish Freshman English—declare that we have no more responsibility for teaching writing than any other teacher does, and let someone else worry about it.

But before we decide to dynamite Freshman English and end its 75 years of troubled life, I think we should remember that a few things can be said in favor of the course, that it has been and is by no means a totally unsuccessful and profitless operation. For example, we are all aware of the role of Freshman English in subsidizing graduate study in our field. This circumstance is really not germane to an evaluation of the course itself, and I would oppose using it as an argument for preserving the course. At the same time, the function is necessary and will remain so; though I have no way of arriving at exact figures, I would be surprised if at least 75 per cent of those who hold doctorates in English have not at some time accepted employment in the Freshman course to help them on their way to an advanced degree.

Equally important, though again peripheral to an assessment of the course, is the indispensable opportunity that Freshman English continues to offer for letting young teachers gain actual classroom experience. Administrators, students, and parents of students sometimes talk as if they want colleges and universities to employ only experienced teachers, apparently forgetting that there is no way for an inexperienced teacher to become an experienced teacher unless someone, sometime, gives him a class of his own and lets him begin to teach.

There is a tendency also to assume rather glibly that *because* a great many classes in Freshman English are taught by graduate students, *therefore* those classes are poorly taught. Sometimes they are, it is true; there is no substitute for mature wisdom. But neither is there any substitute for the youthful vigor and enthusiasm and idealism that, when applied to students not far separated in years from their teacher, can often achieve startlingly good results, even when mastery of subject matter is less than complete.

And not only is some of the teaching in Freshman English good, I am sure that some of the courses are solid and worthwhile.

When we talk of "Freshman English as it now exists" we are dealing with a very large abstraction. Freshman English now exists in many, many forms; it is not reasonable to assume that all of them are completely reprehensible. I do not mean to say that we cannot come to an understanding about Freshman English in its general or typical form; I merely suggest that we should recognize the qualitative range that must exist in this course as surely as it does in others.

Finally, I think there must be some value in requiring all Freshmen to take at least one course that has writing as its focus—a course that talks about writing a good part of the time, that makes students do a lot of writing, and that expects teachers to read and correct the writing carefully. Results will be partial at best; but there is a fair likelihood that they ought to be at least a little better than in a course that does not focus on writing to the same extent.

So much for the two sides of the coin. Now let us suppose that Freshman English were generally abolished in the near future. What would be some of the results? Again, I will mention only a few of the most obvious.

In the first place, I'm sure you are all aware of the specter of technological unemployment that hovers over this discussion. I mention this, but I would not want to base on it an argument for retaining the Freshman course. We have enough troubles without inviting the charge of featherbedding.

It might be argued that abolishing Freshman English would save money for the colleges at a time when educational costs are rising sharply. It would—but only if nothing were put in its place and students were allowed to graduate with that many fewer credits. I doubt that this would happen; any college or university is full of ambitious departments convinced that unless students can be made to take more of their courses, the future of the nation has been imperiled. I think the vacuum would be filled almost at once, and with something that would almost certainly cost more to teach than Freshman English. One administrative advantage of Freshman English, though not one that I view with much satisfaction, is that it is relatively inexpen-

sive: it needs no equipment except a classroom and a blackboard, and it employs teachers who, even if they have professorial rank, usually are paid at a lower rate than their counterparts in many other departments.

Another result, or at least a theoretical one, of abolishing Freshman English would be to distribute the responsibility for teaching writing among the entire faculty. Now, if the rest of the faculty would really accept this responsibility and discharge it adequately, I would cheer at least as loud as anyone else in our profession, for the imperfect success of the present Freshman course is due in considerable part to the failure of other teachers (both school and college) to insist that their students use reasonably correct and precise English.

I am thoroughly in favor of doing everything possible to make other teachers recognize the stake that they themselves, as well as their students, have in fostering a ready control of good written English. But I would not be optimistic enough to expect the job to be so well done by these other teachers that the English department need not concern itself with student English any more than another department would. Even with the best will in the world, teachers of foreign language, of mathematics, and to some extent, of laboratory science courses ordinarily have rather limited opportunities to police the written English of their students. The best opportunities, outside the English department itself, would probably be found in history and social science courses and in some courses in Education.

Now if by good written English we mean no more than written English free, or relatively free, from mechanical errors—grammar, spelling, punctuation—any educated person ought to be competent to do the necessary checking. (Whether college faculties consist wholly of educated persons, in this sense, is perhaps another question.) This is precisely the view of good English held by most of our lay critics. But I would hope that when English teachers, at least, talk about good written English they have a less impoverished concept in mind, one that takes into account not just mechanical correctness, which is surely a minimum objective at best, but logical

consistency and rhetorical effectiveness also. It may be that teachers of sociology or home economics or engineering drawing are fully as well equipped as English teachers are to check on and to foster logical consistency in writing. I hope they are. But I am not convinced that they are equally well prepared to pass judgment on and to teach rhetorical effectiveness. English teachers, as well as teachers of speech, work in the main stream of the rhetorical tradition. The rhetoric of written English is a legitimate part of English subject-matter which we should be able to teach with an expertness that other teachers could not equal and would not expect to equal. To the extent that I may be mistaken in this belief, I suggest that some inquiry is called for into undergraduate and graduate curricula for prospective college English teachers.

If Freshman English is abolished, obviously the job that it is trying to do, even though imperfectly, must be done somewhere. The logical place is the high school. I think myself that the high school is where much of the present work of Freshman English ought to be taken care of. I suspect that most high school English teachers would agree, if for no other reason than to get the college people off their backs. But I'm sure we all know that it won't be enough for us merely to say "It's not our job, let the high schools do it," and then proceed on the assumption that the high schools *can* and *will* do it. We in the colleges have several distinct advantages over our high school colleagues: smaller classes, lower total work loads, more thorough professional preparation (on the average), and more mature students—yet our results in the Freshman course usually have pleased neither ourselves nor our critics. We would be whimsical to assume that high school teachers, laboring under much less favorable conditions—indeed, conditions that we would think intolerable—could do a job well that we have done indifferently at best. They will need help, especially from us.

What kind of help? What can and should we in the colleges do to help? Not very long ago I would have answered these questions with the usual benevolent generalities: we should promote better rela-

tions between high school and college English teachers, we should encourage the high schools to raise their standards and to require more themes, we should urge that teacher preparation be improved by requiring more hours of English—and so on. Such pronouncements have the advantage of showing that you are on the side of right and progress, without requiring you to become personally involved in tiresome details.

But I think that now I can offer considerably more specific answers to these questions. For a little more than a year I have been working with a project that involves the eleven public high schools of Portland, Oregon—one of the best school systems in the United States, incidentally—and nine Oregon colleges and universities, this number including virtually all the important collegiate institutions of the state, with the exception of the three colleges of Education. We call this project, which has been financed by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, the Portland High School Curriculum Study. Last spring the Study engaged over fifty college professors from the chief subject-matter fields to evaluate the college-preparatory curriculum in the Portland high schools with a view to recommending ways of upgrading both it and college curricula and correlating the two in ways and to a degree that have heretofore been impossible.

The thirteen volumes containing the findings and recommendations of the Study have now been presented to the School Board. Several of the volumes bear on our discussion, but especially the one on the curriculum in English language and composition. It was prepared by two well-known members of NCTE, Professor Robert M. Gorrell of the University of Nevada and Professor Paul Roberts of San Jose State College. By drawing on the substance of their report, as well as on the other reports and the general recommendations of the Study, I want to describe for you a systematic effort by college English teachers to help their high school colleagues teach more successfully than they have been able to do the principles and practice of good writing, and in this way to take the first step toward enabling the high schools to do much of what Freshman English now

attempts. The pattern that has been worked out in Portland is not the only one possible, but it is the most ambitious effort of this sort that I have heard of and it is close to the action stage.

To begin with, Professor Roberts and Professor Gorrell spent a good deal of time visiting English classes in the Portland high schools, talking with teachers and administrators, and reading textbooks and syllabuses. They kept in close touch with a larger committee that was studying the literature curriculum and with another professor who was examining the work in speech; language and writing, literature, and speech are all part of the English curriculum in Portland as they are generally in high schools, and they are taught, almost entirely, by the same teachers. After informing themselves thoroughly of what the existing English curriculum is, in both theory and practice, all the consultants agreed to recommend that the high school English curriculum be restricted to two basic purposes: teaching the student to read with understanding and appreciation, and acquainting him with significant works of literature; and giving him some understanding of what language is and how it works, and helping him use his own language well in thinking, writing, and speaking. These purposes represent a considerable pruning of other concerns now attached to the English curriculum. The consultants agreed also on a very tentative allotment of time through the four years of courses: two-fifths to literature, two-fifths to practice in writing and speaking, and one-fifth to language.

The study of language, as recommended by Professor Gorrell and Professor Roberts, would be a major innovation in the high schools. They argue that in addition to the application of language study to writing, a knowledge of the nature, development, and working of language, particularly English, is an essential ingredient of a liberal education and that this study should be pursued for its humanistic value through all four years of the English curriculum.

The report on English language and composition contains many other specific suggestions and recommendations for the high school curriculum for students with

college potential but I will not have time to mention them here. I will say only that all of them comprise a systematic attempt to improve high school instruction in writing to the point where many of the present aims of Freshman English in college could be accomplished before students graduate from high school.

To bring the new English curriculum into being, the consultants for literature, language and composition, and speech have recommended the appointment of four committees, one for each course; each committee will be composed of two college professors of English and two high school teachers, all of them relieved of one-fourth of their teaching duties for at least the 1960-1961 school year and all working full-time for six weeks next summer. It is planned to enlist the aid of specialist consultants from college English departments for at least the next three years initially, and perhaps permanently. Funds will be provided to bring these people in from time to time during the year as they are needed for help with curricular problems.

Because few high school teachers—in Portland or elsewhere—are adequately prepared to teach the revised English curriculum that has been proposed, we are planning to set up special six-week institutes in the summers of 1960 and 1961 for a selected group of teachers representing each high school. In the two summers they will take a total of four courses from a list of eight in literature, language, and speech. The consultants recommend also that a small group of especially outstanding teachers be selected each year (eventually one from each English department) for a year of graduate study in English at full salary. These teachers and the ones who attend the institutes can serve as specialist consultants in their own departments. They can help appreciably to orient their colleagues toward the new courses and to set a standard of achievement in teaching.

Since the only realistic long-term solution to the problem of teacher preparation is to revise teacher education programs in the colleges, all the reports, including the report on language and composition, are making detailed suggestions to guide such revision, and the participating colleges and

universities have agreed to consider these thoroughly at the appropriate time.

The reports urge us college teachers not to rest content with pious lamentations about the high school teacher's thirty-hour class schedule and 160 or 180 students; instead, we should lend our own prestige, influence, and powers of persuasion to a campaign for a reduced work load. High school teachers and administrators by themselves have been virtually powerless to bring about the needed reforms, and even with our help the job will not be easy. But it should not prove impossible. We might heighten our zeal by reflecting that in helping the high school teachers in this way we are also helping ourselves; that unless substantial improvements can be made in these and other working conditions for high school English teachers, our hope of getting the high schools to accomplish successfully the aims now assigned to Freshman English is merely wistful.

This is what we are doing in Portland and what we plan to do. You will notice that our project calls for a degree and kind of cooperation between teachers at the two levels that probably is unprecedented, a systematic and continuing endeavor by the college English teachers to concern themselves actively with the high school curriculum and the professional welfare of their high school colleagues. It seems to me that this is the only realistic way to improve high school instruction, and it depends on our clear recognition of the stake that we as college teachers have in a sound high school curriculum, and our consequent responsibility toward our colleagues in the lower schools.

Now, let's assume that by means of the procedures I have outlined, or something like them, the high schools will begin to graduate substantially larger numbers of young people who usually can write clear, accurate sentences and organize them into logical paragraphs, and who can use standard English with some confidence and spell and punctuate it correctly. I don't suggest that all high school graduates will have this ability, but rather I would hope that the majority of those who are of college caliber would. (I define students of college caliber as approximately the top 40 or 45 per cent in ability and academic

achievement.)¹ It seems to me that under such happy conditions—but *only* under them—we could safely eliminate the typical Freshman English course as it is now constituted.

But I would still recommend a required Freshman course in English. Let me explain.

I think that a lot of the trouble we are having with the present Freshman course comes from the widespread failure of college English departments to recognize sufficiently that the teaching of language and writing is one of their inescapable responsibilities, and to include among requirements for future English teachers a selection of courses pertinent to the teaching of these. This deficiency puts a great many teachers of Freshman English (and high school English) at a serious disadvantage, and goes far to explain such phenomena as the introduction of other kinds of content from outside the field of English (witness the usual Freshman anthology), the continued survival of a set of desiccated rhetorical principles devised by second-rate theorists in the nineteenth century, and the fantastic state of innocence in some English teachers regarding language research in the last half or three-quarters of a century. The last of these is at least partly responsible for the astonishing variety of grading standards that nearly any English staff exhibits, and perhaps wholly responsible for the curious "tis so" "tain't so" arguments in English faculty meetings over such things as the use of "due to" and "the reason is because."

Perhaps this failure of college English departments to take sufficient account of language and rhetoric as legitimate subject matter will explain the widespread notion that all we need aim at in teaching students to write is a minimum level of competence. We tend to ask, "Do they write well enough to get by?" and if we think they do we usually exempt them from part

or all of the Freshman course. A more proper question, I think, would be, "How much better can they be taught to write?"—for writing is a skill with no top limit. The policy of exempting the better students puts us in the curious position of appearing to say that we have things to teach the poor and the average student but nothing to offer the good one. I cannot bring myself to believe that properly qualified college English teachers should be unable to help even the best students improve their command of written English.

What I am suggesting, in short, is the creation of a new course in Freshman English, *after* the necessity for the existing one has been removed. Its exact outlines would need to be worked out by wiser heads than mine, but I would suggest that it be a course in which the student does a great deal of writing and the teacher criticizes that writing with care, concentrating on the development of a firm and mature style. It need not be writing done in a vacuum, for it should be based on the legitimate subject matter of the course. This subject matter should be literature, language, and rhetoric—all at a more advanced level than in the high school courses; earlier study will certainly not have exhausted any of these bodies of material. And I would suggest in passing that since we already have a New Criticism and a New Grammar, we begin thinking about the desirability of working out a New Rhetoric, surely long overdue.

Anticipating a revised English curriculum in high school and a new and upgraded freshman course in college, I would propose an early revision of the pattern of courses taken by students intending to teach English at either level. The program of these students should certainly include, besides sufficient courses in literature, substantial work in language, rhetorical theory, and advanced expository writing. In this I follow the recommendations of Professor Gorrell and Professor Roberts.

I can sum up very briefly my position with regard to the question we are discussing. I am dissatisfied with the present Freshman English course in its typical form; but I am convinced that any radical amelioration must wait on, not precede, changes in the English curriculum in high

¹I base this figure on a study made of the 1958 graduating class in the Portland high schools, which showed that 41 per cent of these students had an I.Q. of 110 or above. It is not unreasonable to expect, assuming desire and diligence, that students within this range of ability could profitably complete a four-year course of study in many curricula at many accredited colleges and universities.

school. Attempted coercion of high school English teachers would get us nowhere. They would like to do a better job of teaching writing quite as much as we would like to have them do it; but we must help them, working with them as equals on a problem neither they nor we have so far been able to solve properly. If our combined efforts lead to the results we want, the need for the present Freshman course would disappear—but not the need for a new Freshman course that would take advantage of and build upon the revised

high school courses. I would argue that such a course ought to be of at least as much value to the freshman as any other course he might take in that year—valuable because it would concentrate on trying to raise the level of his writing skill from competence to distinction, and valuable also because it would contribute significantly to his liberal education through the continued study of literature and language. Both of these are rightful concerns of an English department. Indeed, I think they are obligations.

The Advanced Placement Program's Implications for the Preparation of Teachers of English

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The article is revised from a paper given at the 1959 CCCC meetings.*

The number of schools, students, and colleges participating in the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board is now growing so rapidly that those of us engaged in preparing teachers of English for the independent and public high schools had better look at its implications. In 1952, the School and College Study of Admissions with Advanced Standing was started by a group of teachers and administrators in a few schools and colleges; their purpose was:

... to assist the strong secondary schools, both independent and public, in planning and teaching courses in eleven subjects conventionally taught to college freshmen in order that able school boys and girls may proceed farther than at present in the standard studies of a liberal education. When in full operation the advanced or honors courses in some of the subjects will start in the tenth and continue through the twelfth grade, preparing students for sophomore-level work in the subject in college. Thus able young people may expect to

enter college at the conventional age but with more extensive preparation than at present.

To give official standing to the intensive advanced study in secondary schools, the colleges have agreed to consider examinations and other evidence of accomplishments as a basis for rewarding credit toward the bachelor's degree.

Between 1954 and 1959, the number of independent and public high schools participating in the program increased from 18 to 561; the number of secondary school seniors enrolled in advanced placement courses increased from 532 to 5,825; the number of Advanced Placement examinations taken by seniors increased from 959 to 8,212; and the number of colleges entered by these students increased from 94 to 379, the latest number representing about one-fifth of the degree-granting institutions in the United States. As conspicuous as these increases may be, they are insignificant, however, when compared to the possibilities for the program in the

more than 20,000 high schools in the country.

Those of us interested in expanding the participation in this meritorious plan have apparently been overlooking one obvious opportunity: that of introducing *prospective secondary-school teachers* to it during their college years. So far as I can tell, no college has yet introduced the program into its courses required of students preparing to teach in high schools. I confess at the outset, therefore, that what I have to say on this subject is based largely upon speculation, not upon experience in educating candidates specifically to teach college-level courses in high school.

Before we can discuss acquainting college students with the program during their pre-service education, however, we should first determine just what kind of teaching we are preparing them to do. The basic assumption underlying the AP English Program is that the content and caliber of teaching in the twelfth-grade English course are equivalent to the content and quality of teaching in the conventional college Freshman English course. It is further assumed that the students completing this advanced high school course and qualifying for college sophomore standing have acquired the appropriate attitudes, appreciations, knowledges, and skills equivalent to those obtained by college students at the end of their Freshman English program, and that, as entering students, they are just as ready for second-level college English courses as are the college sophomores-to-be.

Because of the great diversity among college courses in Freshman English, generalizing about the kind of equivalent course the high schools should establish and about the specific kind of teaching the high school English teacher should follow as a pattern of college teaching of Freshman English is risky, if not absurd. Another source of uneasiness in determining equivalence is that many of the high school teachers now participating in the program have had much more teaching experience than have some of the college instructors of Freshman English whose teaching is presumed to serve as a hallmark in equating the competence of the two groups. But generalize we must.

Fortunately, much of the distilling has already been done by some of the college departments participating in the Program, and are available in the excellent statements on "Literature and English Composition" in the bulletin on *College Admission with Advanced Standing* and in the 1958 *Advanced Placement Program Syllabus*. The following statements from the *Syllabus* indicate the recommended emphasis in advanced courses in high school. They also indicate somewhat the kind of teaching we should be preparing college students to do in high school.

Advanced work in literature is more concerned with the quality than the quantity of a student's reading. It does not, therefore, attempt to "cover" either a large number of works or any given body of literature. It rather tries to develop in the student those skills which characterize a mature reader. By analyzing patterns of structure, rhetorical devices, techniques of characterization, the use of parallels and contrasts, and above all the connotative values of words, phrases, and figures of speech, the student develops a respect for the precision with which a literary work not only communicates ideas but defines specific attitudes and evokes particular emotional responses. The student thereby becomes not only a sensitive reader, but also a responsible one. . . .

Advanced work in composition teaches students to write well about something important. The core of the training in composition is therefore the frequent writing and careful revision of substantial themes on subjects sufficiently mature to challenge both thought and linguistic powers. These themes should be distinguished by superior command of *substance*, thoughtfully and interestingly presented.

A good student writer will demonstrate a high level of proficiency in *organization*, combining clear sentences in well-shaped paragraphs and arranging these in an order clear to the reader as well as to himself. He is aware of the importance of organic structure, distinguishes the major parts and the subdivisions of the whole, and deliberately develops his paper with a sense of controlling purpose and orderly progression.

The job we should be educating prospective teachers to fulfill in teaching an advanced class in high school differs mainly in degree rather than kind from that of teaching the usual English class. The emphasis in teaching literature, for example, should not be upon merely getting a student to read something somehow. Instead, it should be

upon helping him understand and enjoy literature by means of his developing the power to read a selection intensively in order to identify the details of both the content and the form and to evaluate and appreciate the unity resulting from the successful blending of the two. The emphasis in teaching writing should not be upon getting from the student merely accounts of his personal experiences and impressions. Instead, it should be upon his learning to use the principles of rhetoric as means of his making wise choices in thinking about a subject and in his presenting "some meaningful assertion about the narrowed subject" in a way suited to his audience and the circumstances.

Many college programs of teacher education already have resources for preparing the teacher of English to do the kind of teaching just described. But certain aspects of the needed knowledge and skills may have to be more clearly recognized and then given far greater emphasis than they seem to be getting now. In some cases, additional courses may have to be established or required. And at certain stages in the program, special additional activities should be stressed. At the outset of this discussion of these proposed emphases and changes, I wish to state that I believe these suggestions are also suitable, however, for *all* teachers of high school English. In this connection, I am reminded of what Professor Charles Keller said about special high school programs for able students: "I like only programs for able students which benefit schools and school systems as a whole."

Let us look first at the implications of preparing a candidate to teach composition in an advanced course in high school. In addition to his Freshman English course, he should have an advanced course in expository writing that provides him with further instruction and frequent practice in writing, revising, and conferring with his instructor about his essays in which he demonstrates his ability to use the various ways of thinking about "subjects sufficiently mature to challenge both thought and linguistic powers." Throughout his thinking about and developing each paper, he should be applying the attitudes and skills of critical thinking and problem solving, some elements of which are mentioned

in the *APP Syllabus*: "supporting general statements with specific proofs," distinguishing between causes and effects and between opinion and fact, and avoiding *non sequiturs* and redundancies.¹

To be in keeping with such emphasis, the instructor obviously must not let his "grading" of papers degenerate into mere proof-reading for errors in spelling and misuse of punctuation. Instead, he must evaluate substance and organization, the kind of thinking demonstrated by the writer, the validity of his evidence, the wisdom of his choices at each step of the development of his presentation to suit his purpose and the nature of his audience and circumstances.

In this process, the prospective teacher should also learn that when his evaluated paper is returned to him, the assignment is not yet fulfilled. He must conscientiously revise his paper in accordance with his instructor's questions and suggestions. Then in conference, his thinking as well as his writing should be discussed. In so doing, he should learn, as the University of Michigan reminds its instructors, that the conference is the place "to adapt the aims of the course to the needs of the individual student."

Additional instruction and practice in this kind of thinking, writing, revising, and conferring should be given also in the course in the methods of teaching English in secondary schools. In this course the assigned subjects can be problems in the various aspects of English as a school subject and in the teaching of it in the schools and in college Freshman courses. Here, however, the student should also get experience in evaluating his classmates' essays, reading papers aloud in groups of students, preparing for and having conferences with the writers, and carefully revising his papers in keeping with the suggestions and evaluations made by classmates and by the instructor, who of course has

¹For a more detailed outline of critical thinking and problem solving see my "Coordinating Composition in High School and College," *The English Journal*, XLVIII (March 1959), 130-131. This outline is a revision of one that Paul Diederich of the Educational Testing Service and I had prepared for another purpose.

to make final decisions. The student's evaluation of themes should also be judged.

The candidate should also practice applying this process of evaluation to themes written by high school students, some of which can be dittoed to enable students in the methods class to compare their treatment of the same composition. To see some college instructors' evaluations of themes written by high school students and college freshmen, he should study and discuss pamphlets containing sample themes and instructors' evaluations, such as those published by the Universities of Wisconsin and Kentucky. And in his study of sample textbooks of composition and grammar he should also examine some of the texts commonly used in college Freshman English courses.

Further, he needs a course in the English language that will help him realize that he is preparing to become, basically, a teacher of the English language. This course should equip him with knowledge of and a scholarly attitude toward language through his study of the realities of traditional English grammar, current linguistic studies of the structure of the English sentence and of the relationships between spoken and written English, linguistic atlases, and other studies of current American usage. In all of these matters related to the English language, the course in methods should not only reinforce his knowledge and command of English as a language and as a school subject but also help him apply his knowledge and skill in the high school classroom.

In considering the kind of education the prospective teacher should get through his study of literature, we immediately encounter, of course, the frustrating but common dilemma of how, in the short time available, the college can provide him with sufficient knowledge of classical, world, English, American, contemporary literature, and of literary types, and at the same time train him adequately to analyze intensively examples of each literary type. It seems to me, however, that one crucial implication of the APP in English is this: if, because of restricted time, either aspect of training in literature—the extensive or intensive—has to be favored, learning how to analyze literary selections intensively is

the more important emphasis for the student who later may teach college-level courses.

None of us wishes, I am sure, to encourage a teacher to direct his advanced course at the APP national examinations, but I do think that he should guide his teaching of literature, for example, toward giving his students the knowledge and skill that would result from the kind of teaching the committee constructing the examinations considers desirable in college-level courses. The kind of skill in analyzing a literary selection students should have may be illustrated by two of the seven questions used in a recent APP English examination to test students' ability to read John Crowe Ransom's poem, "Janet Waking," presented in full in the questions:

(3) What is the *narrator's* (as distinguished from Janet's) *reaction* to the death of the hen as revealed in the fourth and fifth stanzas? What emotional effect on the reader is produced by the use of the word "transmogrifying"? Show how several other words, phrases, or literary devices used in these two stanzas have a similar effect.

(6) Discuss the full implications of the poem's title, "Janet Waking." Briefly show how the *emotional progression* from section to section (reaching a climax in the final stanzas) helps bring out these implications.

A major implication, then, for the preparation of a teacher of English is that in his courses in literature and methods of teaching English, he should learn in studying, say, *Tom Jones*, how to read *any* novel, not just *Tom Jones*. In analyzing a literary selection, certainly the prospective teacher must himself be able to do what is expected of the high school student in college-level courses: analyze "patterns of structure, rhetorical devices, techniques of characterization, the use of parallels and contrasts, and above all the connotative values of words, phrases, and figures of speech. . . ." And he, too, should develop a "respect for the precision with which a literary work not only communicates ideas but defines specific attitudes and evokes particular emotional responses."

If we expect the candidate to be able to perform this kind of analysis, instructors in literature courses should not be content simply to *demonstrate* a method or merely

to tell students about it. The student must be taught *how to do it*. Two courses in which the student should have opportunities to practice this kind of close analysis and to try to teach it to others are the methods course and student teaching. In the former the student should get an opportunity to analyze a selection intensively in teaching it to the class. The selections can be some frequently used in high school classes and some used in college freshman English courses. Opportunities in student teaching will be discussed later.

Yet he must also be widely read. An analysis of students' answers to one APP examination in literature shows that some advanced students are surprisingly well read, especially in modern and foreign literature.¹ Here again we come up against this nagging question of time. When, within the already crowded limits of a college program, does the student preparing to teach extend his reading far beyond assigned materials? In other words, when in college does he find time or even stimulus to read as much as high school students in advanced courses seem to be reading.

One of the most significant contributions that should—but often does not—result from courses in literature and the methods of teaching in English is the furthering or, if necessary, engendering of a student's life-time interest in and habit of reading books. I think we are seriously mistaken when we assume (1) that English majors and teachers voluntarily read books and (2) that teachers of college English have no responsibility for continuously stimulating students to read books outside their courses.

College instructors must assume some responsibility for ingraining in students the habit of reading books voluntarily. They should relate to their work with students their own experiences as readers, their own experiences in how they become interested in reading a particular book. If instructors would take just a few minutes of a class

hour each week to show students what they themselves are reading and to talk informally about these books, they would undoubtedly arouse many students' interests in reading. By being examples of habitual readers of books, by briefly and informally discussing in class books they are reading, by providing students with suggestions to guide their reading, and by urging them to read continuously, college instructors can make valuable contributions to the life-time education of prospective teachers.

As mentioned earlier, the prospective teacher should learn about the APP before he leaves college. One logical place for him to become acquainted with it is in his methods class. There he should read and discuss the purpose and history of the program, the latest *Syllabus*, and sample syllabi of high school and college Freshman English courses. He should also join the National Council of Teachers of English and subscribe to *College English* and *College Composition and Communication*. To point up the recommendations in these materials, the instructor should invite to the methods class some college freshmen and some high-school seniors to discuss with the prospective teachers what they think about their high school English courses as preparation for college English. These matters may be further clarified by the prospective teacher's visiting available advanced standing classes in nearby high schools and by attending sections of Freshman English in his own college. Because later in high school this student may teach courses presumably of college caliber, the college Department of English should be especially eager to have him attend freshman classes and staff meetings in which instructors of freshmen discuss the teaching of writing and literature and the evaluation of compositions. In the course of these experiences, the candidate should also learn how important the library is to students in the APP courses and how important it is that the teacher know how to use the full resources of the school and community libraries.

Finally, during student teaching, he should use some of the methods found to be effective in advanced standing classes and that seem appropriate also for the particular regular class he happens to be teaching. In so far as his schedule permits, he

¹This study by Albert Friedman and R. S. Peterson is reported in part by Edwin H. Sauer in "The High School Literature Program Reconsidered," *Harvard School of Education Alumni Bulletin* (June 1958), p. 5.

should confer with his students to discuss their compositions and other class work and thus learn to adapt the course to the individual. If APP classes are being held in his school, he should attend them occasionally. And he should continue to visit sections of Freshman English in his college to note any differences in the materials and instruction in the twelfth and thirteenth grades. Because some of the communities now having AP programs held extensive "educational meetings" with parents to acquaint them in advance with the purpose and nature of the program, the prospective teacher should during his student teaching get what experience he can in working with parents. In short, during his student teaching he should have some opportunity to see being put into practice and even to put into practice himself some of what he has learned in college about the kind of teaching considered suitable for college-level English classes in high school.

Through some such programs as outlined here, many future teachers of high school English would be informed on the possibilities of the Advanced Placement Program in English. If they happen to be employed by schools already participating in the program, these new teachers should soon be qualified to take part in it. If their schools are not participating in it, these new teachers will be sufficiently well informed to begin to discuss the program with their departmental chairmen and principals. Somebody in the schools not now in the program has to begin talking about it. Thus the program may be continuously expanded.

It would seem, then, that if those of us who have welcomed the demonstrated worth of the program wish to encourage its further development in more of the 20,000 high schools, we should recognize the program's implications for the preparation of prospective teachers. I believe that the plan is probably the most effective means of stimulating capable students in high school to make the most of their academic abilities and of advancing their high school and college studies. By its pervasive effect upon the intellectual atmosphere of the school, it is one of our most potent weapons for combatting many high school students' educational apathy and even outright resistance to learning. It is also a realistic means of helping teachers, both those in the program and those not, to become more effective teachers.

Professor Keller emphasized the spreading influence of the Advanced Placement Program when he said:

... It is more than just a program; it has affected curriculum thinking, and course planning and teaching, communication between schools and colleges particularly at the *teacher* level and articulation of work done in school and college, curricular flexibility in colleges, and the intellectual tone in both schools and colleges.²

And I would add that it should at once affect also the college education of students preparing to teach English in the high schools.

²A speech Professor Keller made at Lexington, Massachusetts, September 1958.

The National Council of Teachers of English

invites you to its

Golden Anniversary Convention

Chicago, November 1960

The Preparation and Certification of Teachers of English: 1958 Supplement to *A Bibliography (1950-1956)*

AUTREY NELL WILEY, *Editor*

Professor and Director, Department of English, and Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Texas Woman's University

For the NCTE Committee on the Preparation and Certification of Teachers of English: *Chairman*, Eugene E. Slaughter; *Associate Chairman*, Karl Dykema; *Consultant*, Donald R. Tuttle; *Ex Officio Members*, George Arms and J. N. Hook; Agnes V. Boner, Richard Braddock, Howard O. Brogan, Marie D. Bryan, John Cowley, John H. Fisher, John McKiernan, A. K. Stevens, Margaret Ann Thomas, Vern Wagner, and Autrey Nell Wiley.

The following bibliography is the second in a projected series of annual supplements to the pamphlet published by NCTE in November 1957, *The Preparation and Certification of Teachers of English. A Bibliography (1950-1956)*. It is the intent of the Committee to give information which describes broadly the certification movement in relation to English and which represents all points of view. The views of the Committee will be presented in a book on the certification of teachers of English, edited by Professor Slaughter, the Chairman, with Professor Tuttle, the Consultant. The Editor welcomes information, and wishes space were available for more entries and for some interpretation, since 1958 was a year memorable for its debates, its search for issues in the teaching of English, and its conferences uniting teachers of subject matter and educationists in efforts to improve teaching.

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EIGHT O'CLOCK CLASS

Three times a week this small assembly meets,
With drooping eyelids and half-hidden yawn,
To hear, incredulous, how Shelley, Keats,
And Wordsworth rose to write before the dawn.

RICHARD ARMOUR

SCRIPPS COLLEGE

A New Way to Teach Composition: Controlled Materials

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The latest phenomenon in the world of freshman composition texts is the "controlled materials" book, but I believe this phenomenon has not been understood. As most of us know, such a collection of documents runs as long as 100,000 words, the topic is usually controversial, and the chief advertised purpose (narrower than the one this article proposes) is to make the instructor an effective supervisor and accurate critic of that freshman research paper which depends solely on the sources this one-volume reference library provides.

The trend began quietly in 1949, with "Historical Narrative—John Brown at Harper's Ferry," fifty-odd pages of original documents in *Problems in Reading and Writing*, edited by Henry W. Sams and Waldo McNeir (Prentice-Hall). Behind their idea was a new kind of history text—not synthetic, secondary narrative but a variety of primary sources bearing on specific problems.¹ The Sams-McNeir book was used at Harvard in 1949-1950, and the first full-length controlled materials text, *What Happened in Salem?*, was prepared there that year, for exclusive use at Har-

vard, by a Teaching Fellow, David Levin. Besides posing difficult problems of interpretation and providing the first-hand knowledge required for thorough judgment, this collection was designed to invite traditional expository exercises while the term paper was in progress and to yield several kinds of topic for that paper. (From correspondence with David Levin; also see Theodore Morrison's preface. Levin's book was published in 1952—by Twayne, whose editor-in-chief, John Ciardi, was also at Harvard then—and Harcourt, Brace is re-issuing it this spring in an enlarged, revised edition.)² Perhaps no bright view

²The general method of controlled materials probably precedes Sams and McNeir: I was using it myself in 1951, without knowing of their book or Levin's; and such a text as Simpson, Brown, and Stegner's *An Exposition Workshop* (Little, Brown, 1939) has a similar approach.

It is the current trend that begins in 1949, with the specific idea of limiting the student to primary historical materials. Of the nineteen titles in print at the end of 1959, twelve deal with American history, and three with British. Although this emphasis on historical problems is probably due in part to the origin of the trend, two important reasons for the limitation must be that a small event can be complex and important, yet manageable, and that American and British history are popular. Relevant too are the editors' interests: David Levin, for example, has just published *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (Stanford).

The later, literary sourcebooks—the first of which was Harvey Lyon's *Keats' Well-Read Urn* (Holt, 1958)—belong less to the controlled materials trend than to an overdue five-foot-shelf inventory of the new criticism (begun perhaps as long ago as 1945, with F. W. Dupee's *The Question of Henry James*)—a Talmudic monument to inspire the latest gen-

¹In 1948 the notable example was the new series "Select Problems in Historical Interpretation," edited by members of the Yale Department of History and published by Holt. Introductions to the early volumes name historians associated with the genesis of this approach and make many statements of its purpose (see the last paragraph of this article). In 1949, Heath launched a pamphlet series of the same type, modified by secondary materials—"Problems in American Civilization," developed by the Department of American Studies at Amherst (*Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Supreme Court, Loyalty in a Democratic State*, etc.); and with the success of this venture, Heath was well prepared to take the lead in the field of controlled materials for the research paper.

was at first taken of composition teachers' interest in this new kind of text, for more than three years went by before Heath, in January 1956, started its Selected Source Materials series. But in the years 1956-1958, eight such sourcebooks were published, by several houses, in 1959 ten titles, and by February 1960 twenty-four more titles had been announced.³

What explains the trend? True, these books make a practical tool for introducing the freshman to research: the method can really stop plagiarism, reduce demand on the library, save the student the wasted hours of tracking down third-rate materials, eliminate the unreliability and pre-digestion of random secondary sources, cut the topics to manageable size, demonstrate the meaning of documentation, and so on. Besides,

³Another sign of the trend is the inclusion, in recent conventional freshman readers, of small-scale controlled materials sections: e.g., in 1959, in *Student and Society*, ed. Clark and Culler (Row, Peterson), two groups of selections—"Who Wrote the Plays of Shakespeare?" and "Are There Really Flying Saucers?" and in 1960, in *The Experience of Prose*, ed. Walter B. Rideout (Crowell), eight selections on "High Tide at Gettysburg."

eration of English majors, unborn in 1938, when *Understanding Poetry* appeared. (For the relationship between controlled materials and the new criticism, see the last four paragraphs of this article.) These literary collections too often call for a specialist's interest and skill, even for outside knowledge, not merely for a reasonable mastery of given materials. Lyon's book acknowledges its specialness in the subtitle, *An Introduction to Literary Method*. (Does parochial pride suggest that everyman—or every freshman—can become his own historian but not his own literary critic?) Then, too, the literary sourcebook must be, in part, a response to the notion that the *subject* of such a text should be in the field of English; no—it is the *method* that is English.

Other, more legitimate extensions of the original idea are waiting for publishers' discovery.

I am indebted to David Levin and Henry W. Sams for hitherto unpublished information in this account of the genesis of the controlled materials movement. In addition, Mr. Levin generously lent me his "Sourcebooks and the Freshman Research Paper" (see note 4), which publishers in this field should study.

a controlled materials text can be an easy publication for a teacher to whip up—although not easier than another collection of essays. But what is not pointed out by the articles on this trend that have begun to appear is that the controlled materials method is valuable primarily because it improves the teaching of *composition*—not of research technique.⁴

To draw a parallel: a journalism teacher may say, "Here are press-release A, issued by the Atomic Energy Commission, and press-release B, put out the same morning by the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy; write the first three hundred words of a story covering both releases." That is, the controlled materials method permits the exact, indispensable demands a craftsman makes on an apprentice; when, like a copy of a painting, composition X is measured against model X in the teacher's mind, the student begins to find out what composing is—he is confronted by the demands of a craft. Composition is the right arrangement of the right parts, and the usefulness of the controlled materials method is that it requires of the student rigorously realistic practice in composing, and it brings the composition's content and organization entirely within the instructor's range of judgment, permitting this judgment an unprecedented precision: a composition thus becomes a fairly objective test—an advanced form of those jumbled sentences, in college-entrance examinations, requiring of the student their most coherent rearrangement. With this understanding of the controlled materials method, the teacher assigns, not a term paper, but compositions of five hundred to one thousand words, and all students write on the same topic. No footnotes or bibliography are required, and no one is told he is doing research: the stress is not on the apparatus of research but on its essence—the job is to read responsibly and organize a thoughtful, clear report.

⁴George L. Roth, "The Controlled Materials Method of Teaching the Research Paper," *CEA Critic*, XX (Dec. 1958), 2, 7-8; Robert P. Weeks, "The Case for the Controlled Materials Method," *CCC*, X (Feb. 1959), 33-35; and the report of a CCCC panel (including David Levin) in *CCC*, X (Oct. 1959), 143-146.

In judging the content of a controlled composition, the instructor knows what the student should have seen—what has been omitted or distorted or not understood. Thus we duplicate the method of exact courses—geometry, physics, chemistry: there is a problem to be solved, an answer to be found. The goal of such courses (as in the craftsman's workshop) is professional competence. Is the controlled materials text, then, appropriate only for those whose profession will be writing? No: we need command of our subject-matter when we write within any profession: the engineer's report, the lawyer's brief must have a particular content that solves the problem at hand. That is, when writing has a practical purpose (and that is the kind of writing we teach), the content can be wrong. To demand that the content be right is to train the student in the responsibility of writing within his future profession, whatever that may be (as well as within the general fields of human affairs).

To ask the English teacher to deal with *how* the student writes but not *what* he writes is to ignore the purpose of exposition. The concentration on *how* and exclusion of *what* would make expository writing autonomous, although its only reason for existence is its relation to the world outside—its truth. Good expository writing cannot be taught in such isolation. If the teacher does not know what specific content a paper should contain, he cannot judge how far the writer falls short of meeting his primary obligation. The student of composition who is permitted to ramble and fake, who is not held responsible for an objective body of material, is not really being taught composition. The characteristic acceptable freshman paper is fragmentary, without those complications of thought and fact that require the work of composing.

Controlled materials supply those complications—for example: a dense mass of fact, confused chronology, the need to set an event against its background of time and place, a jumble of fact and opinion, bias, ulterior motives, rationalizations, emotional appeals to stock responses, claims in conflict with evidence, conflicting testimony, the need to evaluate testimony and cross-examination, invalid premises or inferences,

confused cause and effect, tangled issues, conflicting statistics, and so on—but always the need to report objectively. Wrestling with such problems is composition.

For a generation or more, the routine text in expository writing has been devoted to "patterns"—definition, classification, comparison and contrast, and the like. But, concerning an expository paper, the first question is, Is the author right? And to know whether he's right, the reader should be a judge of the paper's content, not merely of some *a priori* pattern; but we who read hundreds of student papers on hundreds of subjects know too little about most of the subjects to judge content exactly. (The Sams-McNeir book combines semi-controlled materials with traditional practice in expository patterns, and David Levin demands of a sourcebook that it permit such exercises in preparation for the term paper.)

The standard text on expository writing is usually accompanied by an anthology of essays that carries two tables of contents—one by pattern and the other by idea (Education, Problems of Democracy, The Popular Arts, Can Man Survive?). Aside from the examination of the exposed patterns, such readings lead to class "discussion," which allegedly helps the student "articulate his ideas"; but usually he is not required to show close grasp of what he has read—only to use it as a springboard. As a poor writer will avoid long sentences and words he can't spell, almost any freshman gladly does five hundred words on "his" ideas about anything—he goes on expressing his ignorance in the clichés that prevent thought, and his glibness will guarantee him no less than a C. He learns no anthropology, sociology, or comparative religion—and he learns no English either.

What he does learn is that good writing need not say anything, that it can be irresponsible; we nurture his long-standing contempt for the purpose of exposition. What are we to say of the young man whose paper earns a 90 for manner and a 15 for matter? Where did this bright adolescent learn that intelligence is the means of evading responsibility? Not only at home or in society at large—also in those English classes where such work was slackly graded B or C.

Yet nothing we try to teach is as important as interest in the truth. This interest is what the English teacher must fundamentally profess—if truth is the first duty of language. The *goodness* of good expository writing is moral as well as esthetic; it indicates not only internal harmony but a harmony between the writing and the facts: the more the exposition says *what there was to be said*, the closer we are to truth, and the more honest or *better* the writing. The controlled materials method rejects the glib waste of ability.

To go from content to organization: when the assignment is a classification, a process, an extended definition, or an un-researched expression of opinion, the instructor is not a first-rate judge of the student's ability to organize. With controlled materials, the student may no longer submit familiar subject-matter in ready-made order—he must impose, on a jungle of new information and ideas, a unity of his own discovery; and the instructor, who has mapped this territory, knows precisely what signs of order to look for. Does the paper follow the haphazard or chronological arrangement of the text, or has the student uncovered a logical order inherent in the material? Are issues confused, or is each issue discussed in clear separation? What logical transitions, exposing the connections between main ideas, have been discovered? Do we find paragraphs juxtaposed whose relationship is obscure, or do introduction, paragraphing, and transitional phrases expose a continuity the writer has consciously contrived? Do the proportions of the paper show accurate evaluation of the importance of the varied materials? Is the evidence, pro and con, on each issue presented in the clearest order, permitting the reader to judge each question as it arises?

Applications of the first two questions may be cited from the use of *Commonwealth vs. Sacco and Vanzetti*, edited by Robert W. Weeks (Prentice-Hall, 1958). In a double-credit, 1000-word paper, *The Case for the Defense*, a poor student will follow the chronology of the text, presenting Sacco and then Vanzetti on the witness stand. The effect on the paper's order is that of throwing cards in the air, since each defendant's cross-examination covers

everything helter-skelter. When, on finishing a paper, I have the feeling that the writer has omitted, say, the defense explanation of the defendants' carrying guns, I need look for this material in only one place if the paper has been logically arranged, but in a disarranged paper I need to look everywhere. Or again—carrying the guns is not the same point as their identification: the first question comes under the issue of "consciousness of guilt," which requires its own large section in the defense case, clearly separate from the question of identifying the two guns and a cap alleged to have been Sacco's; the student who deals with both questions when he takes up the guns will be confusing two different issues. In short, the student must arrange the materials of the defense in that clear order they never had in court and do not have in the text. (For a full demonstration of the teacher's ability to judge organization when he is using controlled materials, see my "Jigsaw Puzzle in Expository Writing," *Exercise Exchange*, IV, Oct. 1956, Appendix B.)

With the controlled materials method, the instructor finds that his criticisms are more effective when the whole class has had the same assignment. A lecture on the papers' common defects is as useful as a review of a physics test. The instructor outlines on the board the material and organization the papers should have had, and explains why. Of course, many instructors will be bored by twenty to twenty-five papers on one topic, despite the satisfaction of being useful; more than one topic at a time may be assigned, and the same text need not be used in more than one section a year.

Finally, the new method makes the freshman more conscious of his sentence-by-sentence writing. Freshman plagiarism, for example, is partly a willed unconsciousness of words and sentences: the copying student protects himself from guilt feelings by denying the reality of words and sentences, reducing them all to an unanalyzable blur. But the student who reads others' work carefully learns to take a closer look at his own; he may even learn to edit with conscious control of his material.

This explanation of the value of the controlled materials text parallels the explana-

tion of Brooks and Warren's success with *Understanding Poetry* (1938). Their approach (derived from I. A. Richards) revolutionized the teaching of poetry by asking precise questions: the precise answers waiting for discovery prove that the poem is real—something is really there. Explication and controlled materials improve the teaching of English by exposing the inherent precision of the object-in-words: reading is seen as a real, productive activity, not a trance (thus "Practical" *Criticism*); and writing is like building a radio—it has a job to do and it must work.

We should not underestimate the educational effect on the student who learns that language is precise. What I. A. Richards accomplished was the end of the ignorance of the genteel tradition, which confused our English classes with the upper classes: Baedeker acquaintance with literature conferred status—not so much as one's birth or accent, but still, one slipped Shelley on, like a lovely glove; the student was not told that liberal education, far from gilding the status quo, consists of peeling it—of practice in observing the reality under the appearance.

Both explication and controlled materials are attractive to a new class of English teachers—the poor or second-generation World War II veterans carried by the GI Bill into graduate school and then college-teaching and text-editing. This new professional class is undermining the *rentier* gentility that once dominated departments of English. The potential market for both movements—the great need for precision in reading and thoughtfulness in writing—is not so much the need felt by the incoming tide of students as it is the need seen by this new generation of teachers.

These two movements in English teaching are part of the whole tendency of the modern mind to come closer to reality by using precise methods—by constantly measuring doctrine against the testimony of the protean facts. When, at the close of World War II, Yale's Department of History launched a fleet of mimeographed primary documents in an attempt to bring veterans

closer to reality (see note 1), the experiment was understood as an application of laboratory method, one purpose being "to demonstrate the principles upon which historical reasoning is based and to allow [the student] to test them out. The student has been doing this very thing in the laboratory-work accompanying courses in the natural sciences." Earlier, in 1935, when Edward J. O'Brien published *The Short Story Case Book* (Farrar and Rinehart), he appealed for precedent not to *explication de texte* but to the Harvard Law School's revolutionary introduction of the case method; another of the Yale collections cites this remark Herndon attributed to Lincoln: "I know that general reading broadens the mind—makes it universal, but it never makes a precise, deep, clear mind. The study of particular cases does do that thing, as I understand it"; and behind the case method of teaching law is the inductive procedure of the laboratory, which had transformed "natural philosophy" into sciences. With controlled materials, we are finally applying something of the methods and standards of the sciences to the teaching of composition. Goose pimples chill the novelist when the social "scientist" calls on him to "quantify"; and in the humanities, at least, the imagination will always be ahead of the laboratory; but neither of these two faculties can fail to be warmed by the light the other sheds.⁵

⁵Yale citations: from the introductions to *Ideas and Institutions in European History 800-1715*, by Thomas C. Mendenhall, Basil D. Henning, and A. S. Foord (Holt, 1948), and *Nationalism and Sectionalism in America 1775-1877*, by David M. Potter and Thomas G. Manning (Holt, 1949). In the introduction to Manning and Potter's *Government and the American Economy 1870-Present* (1950), a three-fold statement of purpose shows plainly the family likeness in the new methods of teaching history and poetry: the editors, requiring (1) "an intensive study of selected topics" and (2) active individual interpretation, not passive reception, promise (3) not a chronology of separate events but an exposure of underlying, unifying historical forces.

Round Table

ACHIEVEMENT IN MECHANICS IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH

ORVILLE BAKER AND ROBERT H. DEZONIA

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The use of standardized tests to identify the more capable student for placement in advanced classes is commonplace in higher education today. Gustad and Fish,¹ for example, have demonstrated the effectiveness of a single test in the placement of entering college students in advanced courses of freshman English.

For several years the placement question and other questions raised by grading practices in the freshman program have been of mutual concern to the English Department and the Bureau of Research of Northern Illinois University. The present report is based primarily on the findings of a cooperative study undertaken during the 1958-1959 academic year. The purpose of that study was to learn something specific about the achievement of all freshmen enrolled in the first semester English course—a course devoted to grammar and expository writing—by determining the relationship between grades awarded and student performance on a standardized English test.

The English Department for a number of years has employed the *Cooperative English Test, Mechanics of Expression: A, Form Z* in the University's freshman testing program. It has been departmental policy to grant students exemption from the first course in English (English 103) if: (1) a scaled score of 68 were attained on the entrance test; (2) a scaled score from 62 through 67, coupled with a high score on a departmental vocabulary test, were attained.

Exemption levels were established on the basis of the probability that students

achieving such scores would earn a grade of B or better if they were actually to enroll in the first course. The assumption was that such students could profit more from the advanced courses in composition and literature than from the basic writing course. The premise of the research project undertaken was that the *Cooperative English Test (CET)* would provide a valid measure of achievement for students in the expository writing course if the test were administered both prior to and after the completion of the course.

All entering freshmen were administered the CET during the pre-enrollment period in the summer and fall of 1958. At the end of the first semester, in January of 1959, the test was repeated. The testing situation was well controlled in both instances. Furthermore, there was little chance that instructors would "teach for the test" during the semester, as plans for the second testing were not divulged until the last two weeks of the semester.

A total of 1,424 students took both tests. Individual gains or losses were computed for these students. Mean gains were computed for each section as well as for the entire group. The group's mean score on the first testing was 47.85; the mean score on the second testing was 52.22. The difference between the means of 4.37 was statistically significant, i.e., the gain accruing from the first to the second testing could not be attributed to chance factors.

For the information of the English faculty the mean score of each class section on the *ACE Psychological Examination for College Freshmen* was reported, as was the number of students showing gains and losses on the CET in each section. But neither the accidental variation in ACE means nor section-by-section variability

¹John W. Gustad and Janice P. Fish, "The Use of the Cooperative Mechanics of Expression Test in Classification at the College Freshman Level," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, XV (Winter 1955), 436.

proved to be especially significant for the purposes of the study.

Of the 1,424 students, a total of about 78% showed a gain, about 15% showed a loss, and about 5% showed no change. In no single section did the mean level of achievement reach the score of 62 required for permission to take the supplementary vocabulary test, not to mention the high level of 68 required for automatic exemption. In individual cases a total of 286 reached the level of 62. On the first testing 519 students scored between 50 and 62. Of these, only 192 (37%) scored 62 or better on the second testing.

At this point members of the research staff raised the following question: "If a score of 62+ implies the probability of a B grade in composition, will a score of something less than this imply a C and satisfactory performance in the course?" On the basis of the grades awarded to the 1,424 students, a score of 50 on the CET, Form Z, would indicate proficiency at the C level. The correlation between grades awarded and test scores was .68, a substantially high correlation which indicated a statistically significant, positive relationship between test scores and grades awarded. With 50 as the point of demarcation between satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance on the CET, about 75% of the total number of students received grades commensurate with the test scores, i.e., for the most part those scoring 50 or above and those below 50 receiving satisfactory (A, B, or C) marks or unsatisfactory (D or F) marks, respectively.

Whether or not the material tested by the CET is a reflection of the content of English 103 at Northern Illinois University, the grade awarded on the completion of this course bears a positive relationship to achievement on this test. It should follow that participation in the course should improve test performance significantly over the department as a whole, although not necessarily by section nor by individual. This is attested by the mean gain of 4.37, which, while being a statistically significant gain, is not practically startling.

In view of the finding that a score of 50 or better generally will result in a student's passing the course with a grade of C or

better, the English Department finds itself confronted with a serious question: "Should students who score 50-65² in the precourse test also be exempted from the elementary writing course?"

It should be remembered that only 37% of this group raised their second test score above 62 and of these people only 40 earned a grade of B. Essentially, the students in the C group, although they raised their test scores as a group by 4.37, did not do well enough in the course to lift themselves above the C which they would have earned on the basis of the test without any first course of instruction.

The point at issue actually is: "How much do we teach our C students in the standard freshman exposition program?" Would they, like the B and A students in the accelerated arrangement, profit more from a solid course in literature and critical writing than from grammar and exposition, since they show little objective improvement in standardized tests that are generally indicative of ability in expository writing?

There seems to be no question as to the efficacy or validity of the CET in selecting top students for exemption. Of the 84 people who were so exempted in the fall of 1958 only 15 earned a grade of C, and these scored in the 62-65 range on the CET. The study by Gustad and Fish earlier mentioned lends support to the above conclusion.

On the basis of the findings of the co-operative research project it would appear that college English departments need to take a long look at the standardized

²A follow-up study of the students exempted from English 103 in the fall of 1958 on the basis of satisfactory scores indicated that more than 25% of the group between 62 and 65 who went directly into the second course in the freshman English sequence—introduction to literature and the term paper—made a grade only of C. The department therefore decided to move the exemption figure up to 65. Moreover, in view of the aims of the second course and the quality expected, a theme appears to be a better determiner of quality than the vocabulary test. This approach is approximately the present University of Illinois practice. Exemption requirements now in effect at Northern Illinois University demand a score on the CET of 65 and an acceptable impromptu paper.

expository writing course. If at other institutions C students also show little improvement in the mechanics of expression after five months of instruction it would seem logical to call for a thorough overhaul of such a course. It may be that the expository writing course should be redesigned into a full scale literature-writing course. Another alternative may be the wholesale movement of students—on the basis of satisfactory CET scores—into the second semester's work in English. Exemption from further training in writing could

be granted if student performance is acceptable in the second course.

The evidence supplied by the research project certainly suggests that for a large percentage of our freshman students English teachers are merely spinning their wheels. Unless the college English program can show more specifically that the five months of training is achieving other goals such as variety in sentence structure, clearer phrasing, improvement in diction, and better organization, the standardized expository writing course ought to go.

THE TREATMENT OF OUTLINING IN COLLEGE RHETORIC TEXTS

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In view of the large number of textbooks on rhetoric published in the last forty years, one would expect that the subject has been so carefully worked over that nothing more remains to be said about it. This is not the case, however; textbook writer after textbook writer has gone on repeating the ideas of his predecessors without recourse to experience, reflection, or common sense. The thoughtless parrotry of modern rhetoricians is well illustrated by their treatment of the conventional outline. Characteristically they have handled this subject with excessive formalism and without regard for either actual practice or logical theory.

Their discussions of outlines are generally based on the formalistic division into topic and sentence outlines, the latter often being considered a more polished version of the former. From this basis is deduced an equally formalistic rule about the grammatical parallelism of outline headings. Likewise in the interest of parallelism is the frequent ban on headings that refer to such rhetorical elements as "introduction" and "summary." Another common principle is the naively logical one that any outline heading which has subheadings must have at least two.

It is evident that these rhetoricians have not had in the forefront of their minds the

actual outlines of experienced writers. Examples of such outlines may be found in profusion in books containing analytical tables of contents. I choose for quotation, almost at random, Gilbert Highet's analysis of Chapter XIV of *The Classical Tradition*:

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Introduction

Importance of the Battle

Its locale

The chief arguments used by the moderns

1. Christian works are better than pagan works
 - Dante, Milton, Tasso
 - Classical education and the churches
2. Science progresses, therefore art progresses
 - Emotional basis of this argument
 - Its truth in science
 - Its falsity in art and the problems of life
 - Forgotten crafts
 - The dwarf on the giant's shoulders
 - The world growing older
 - Spengler's theory of the relative ages of civilizations
 - Interruptions and setbacks in progress
3. Nature does not change
 - The material of art is constant, but the conditions of production change

4. The classics are silly or vulgar

Silliness

the supernatural

myths

style

thought

Vulgarity

low actions and language

primitive manners

comic relief

Chronological survey of the Battle

Phase 1: France

Phase 2: England

Phase 3: France

Results of the Battle

No one would argue that such an outline, although it violates the usual rules in the rhetoric texts, is not clear and logical. From examination of this and similar outlines, certain principles may be discerned: (1) The primary use of a heading in an outline is to refer to a writing unit that is generally one or two paragraphs long. (2) The secondary use of a heading is to indicate important logical relations—e.g., "Chronological survey of the Battle." (3) The main heading-subheading arrangement is used to indicate different logical relations, mainly class division and proof of propositions. (4) Writing units of rhetorical rather than logical importance are so described—e.g., "Introduction" and "Importance of the Battle." (5) Headings are put in the most natural grammatical form—i.e., sentences for propositions, words or phrases for classes—although some slight effort is made at parallelism where strictly parallel points are involved. These principles show the practical outliner to be relatively free of the formalism of the rhetoricians.

This freedom finds justification in logical theory. The most obvious logical relation which the outline may indicate is class inclusion, and class systems are frequently used by rhetoric texts for model outlines—e.g., the branches and departments of government, genera and species of animal families, etc. Outlines representing class systems are quite naturally topic outlines.

We should note that a class system may be applied to a given discourse in three ways. First, the subject itself may be taken as a class and subdivided as in the examples given above. Second, the discourse may be taken as a class and divided into such rhetorical elements as introduction, body, and conclusion or exordium, narration, partition, etc. Third, the class may be simply a collection of traditionally related aspects of the type of subject in question; thus for a historical subject the aspects might include foreign affairs, domestic affairs, cultural and intellectual life, and for a geographical subject, topography, climate, flora and fauna, etc. On the difference between the first and third, observe that it is not the same thing to divide the class Gaul into the subclasses Belgium and Aquitania as to divide a discussion of Gaul into discussions of its topography and climate.

A second logical relation which the outline may indicate is the implication of propositions. Any elementary logic text will tell us that the calculus of classes and the calculus of propositions "have an identical formal structure and [that] every proposition in the theory of classes has a corresponding proposition, obtainable by a suitable interpretation, in the theory of propositions."¹ Thus, the I:A,B pattern means in a class system that I includes A and B (I. Whales: A. Baleen whales, B. Toothed whales), while the same pattern means in a propositional system that I is implied by A and B (I. Whales are mammals: A. Only mammals bear their young alive, B. Whales bear their young alive). Since title and headings are propositions, a propositional outline is quite naturally a sentence outline. Aristotle's analysis of deductive reasoning showed that a conclusion must rest on two premises, but modern rhetoricians (not Aristotle) describe a rhetorical syllogism or enthymeme as having only one premise. To insist that any heading which has subdivisions must have at least two is to deny the possibility of an enthymeme. In all probability, however, the modern rhetoricians have not considered this point but have simply assumed that all outlines represent class systems.

¹M. R. Cohen and E. Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (1934), p. 126.

We have seen, then, that users of outlines are much freer in their practice than modern rhetoricians in their rules, and that outlines may logically represent either class analysis in any of three ways or propositional analysis. It remains to assert that both writer and reader will generally approach a discourse with all of these relations in mind at once. Both will wish to analyze a discourse into writing or reading

units. In an ordinary discourse, as for example in the present one, some of these units will be rhetorical divisions, some class divisions, and some propositions being demonstrated. There is no reason why an outline should not reflect this mixture. Nor is there any reason why the writers of rhetoric texts should not recognize both actual practice and the logical theory on which this practice is based.

IS THE TECHNICAL STUDENT SHORT-CHANGED IN COLLEGE?

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Although mid-twentieth-century America demands more articulate specialists—engineers, chemists, physicists, agriculturalists—the tendency seems to be for colleges to reduce the requirements in communication for the student-specialist. This statement is based upon results of a questionnaire mailed in 1957 to all land-grant colleges and eight additional technical schools. The purpose of the questionnaire was to evaluate technical writing courses offered at Texas Technological College and to collect data for the preparation of a text in technical writing. The results reveal a shortage of training in communicative skills for the technical student.

The questionnaires were mailed to heads of English departments, who were requested to have teachers of technical writing for engineers and agriculture students answer the questionnaire. More than 90% of the schools responded, although some did not answer all of the questions.

TOTAL ENGLISH REQUIREMENTS

Proportions of the schools reporting that only freshman English is required for the technical student are 41% for the aggie, 32% for the engineer. One course above freshman English is required for the aggie in 31% of the schools, 22% for the engineer. Two courses or more above freshman English for the aggie are required in 18% of the schools, in 22% of the schools for the engineer. A variable requirement de-

pendent upon a proficiency test is provided by 10% of the schools for the aggie, 25% for the engineer.

The schools vary in total English requirements from no requirement to 18 semester hours in Speech and English. More English is required for the engineer than for the aggie. Perhaps the most surprising information is that many technical schools require only Freshman English for the technical student, who therefore probably fails to come in contact with the great masterpieces of literature and furthermore does not receive the traditional second year of training in written communication.

Apparently college administration, not the student, is responsible for this shortage in training. In fact, the report of the Committee on College English for Non-Major Students¹ revealed a favorable attitude toward composition and literature on the part of engineers and aggies. For example, the report stated that at Penn State three out of ten aggies considered college composition important and interesting while 21% of the engineers made the same response. A third of the aggies were favorable in their attitude toward the study of sophomore literature while 41% of the engineers were. The aggie, according to this report, is an average book reader even though he is low in motivation;

¹Edward Foster, "College English for Non-Major Students: An NCTE Report," *College English*, Vol. 20 (May 1959), 387.

the typical engineer, "high in general intelligence," is just below average in voluntary book reading.

TECHNICAL WRITING: ELECTIVE OR REQUIRED

According to the survey by Texas Technological College, 54% of the agricultural schools make no requirement in technical writing but provide an elective, while 36% of schools for engineers make the same provisions. All departments in 28% of the schools for aggies require the course; 53% require the course for all engineers. Of the agricultural schools, 46% make requirements of the course in some departments, 64% for the engineers. Three schools require a course in expository writing for the engineer. Less than half of the schools require the aggie to take the course. Specific departments in agriculture requiring the course include forestry, agriculture engineering, agronomy and soil conservation.

More than half of the engineering schools reporting require the course of all engineers.

The questionnaire, to the regret of the author, did not request information about Speech courses. In a section labeled "Other Assignments," 10% of the schools, however, listed the use of oral reports in technical writing; 12% noted substitution of Speech for technical writing. Almost one-fourth of the schools reporting, therefore, gave some emphasis to oral communication.

The results of the questionnaire definitely support the conclusion that college administration has reduced the requirements in communication and is short-changing the technical student at a period when American higher education needs to combat the inarticulateness that too often accompanies specialization. Student specialists should be trained to communicate with each other and with other people.

A COLLEGE COURSE IN ENGINEERING WRITING

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Hysteresis motor stator insulation tester experts take note: There's a company willing to pay you \$8,500 a year if you can explain what it's all about.

So begins an article about technical writing, by Daniel M. Burnham, in a recent issue of *The New York Times*. This article, as dozens of others over the past few years, elaborates on one of the serious current problems of our technological civilization: the incredible amount of technical, scientific, and engineering writing demanded of its personnel and the paucity of people even remotely qualified to write it.

Most universities have begun to adapt to this demand by establishing a course intended to assist their scientific and engineering students in writing. The course varies thoroughly from institution to institution, and on occasion it may camouflage a thinly disguised attempt to inject a last few droplets of "the humanities" into the case-hardened arteries of the scientific student. It is apt to include an enormous

variety of student background, from sophomore to graduate student; in my years with the course I have had, in addition to the usual engineering students, majors in wildlife management, forestry, law, psychology, physiotherapy, anthropology, and even music. The title of the course at the University of Arizona suggests its nature: Exposition for Scientific and Technical Students. Until recently required by several departments of the College of Engineering, it is now a highly recommended non-technical elective; prerequisite is completion of freshman English, and the course, one semester, carries two units' credit.

This is not a course to train a man for employment as "technical writer" or "publications engineer"; no university to my knowledge, with the exception of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, has yet set up such a course, although the demand from industry may soon change this. Today's "technical writer" is required to deal with government publications, contracts, and

handbooks, with parts listing, with advanced techniques of graphic reproduction; he will probably be expected to know more than a little about typography, technical illustration, schematics, and circuitry as well as a dozen other specialized subjects.

The premise of the course is similar to Aristotle's definition of the function of rhetoric: to furnish the tools of persuasion for any given situation; its corollary is that if one can write well he can write anything. The problem faced by the instructor is thus two-fold; he must expand and clarify the student's fluency of expression, concept, and style in writing, and he must demonstrate the application of this fluency to those problems peculiar to scientific and technical writing. Most of the handbooks available are appallingly uneven; they may lean toward theory, in which case the instructor must furnish considerable practical detail, or toward intensely limited practical application, preparing the student to write only in terms of specific report forms. The course described below is not intended as a model; it is merely an outline of one approach to the considerable perplexities of instruction in technical and scientific exposition.

The student is first presented with a sample report, prepared in the format that will be required of him in his assigned written work. He is made aware that the variety of format in industry and business is so vast that he cannot expect training to cope with the details of each, but that an ability to deal with the principles of technical presentation gained from careful work with any one format will enable him to handle any other he may later be required to use. Actual writing begins with letters, three of them, two requiring solutions to actual problems likely to be encountered, and with memoranda, clarifying to the student the fact that the audience he will be writing for determines not only the matter of presentation but the manner and style as well.

Reports, minimum length 750 words, are required in detailed description of a simple artifact, in explanation of operation or process, and in progress and evaluation. These latter two have been arranged into one project which occupies the student's out-of-class time during the middle weeks

of the semester. Committees of four or five students are appointed, each committee to investigate some commercially available product with the view of producing any evaluative summary of the various brands and varieties available to the would-be consumer. The committee must develop its own plan of attack, divide the ground to be covered and allot each section to an individual, and pool data individually gained from brochure, interview, reference work, and tests in the field. After three weeks of investigation each student submits a report of his own progress in the project, and after five weeks he submits his own evaluation, sifted out of the pooled information his committee has gathered. Subjects for these reports are drawn from the students' background and interests: EE majors may be investigating, for example, television sets or stereo hi-fi, mechanical engineers may be dealing with swimming pools or earth-moving equipment, and so on.

The written work of the course culminates in an investigative paper, 2500-word minimum, similar to the familiar freshman "library" paper but dealing at the professional audience level with a subject of vital interest to the student. The instructor may blanch when faced with "Solid-state Theory of Semiconductors" or "The Junction Transistor in the Eccles-Jordan Circuit," but guest experts from other departments may be called in, in case of direct distress, to interpret pages whose total prose content is "Substituting in equation 3.4, we have . . ." The other alternative, assignment of general topics, may furnish easier reading for the instructor, but the papers thus produced generally lack that spark of student enthusiasm necessary to good work. Sometimes a student may combine his investigative paper with an assigned long investigative report for another course.

A good background in expository writing gained from high school and college freshman English is of major importance to the student in this course, but since many of the students have had several years away from English, this background must usually be refreshed. To this end considerable attention is paid in class to prose style, beginning with an analysis of language fundamentals approached through linguistics,

semantics, and communication theory, and leading into an intensive grammatical review. This approach is planned to demonstrate to the student that English is a *language*, as rigorous in fundamentals and as powerful in potential as the language of mathematics. Technical students must be convinced that the canons of "readability" are not necessarily those of good prose, that "write as you speak" is merely the fuzziest excuse for inept style, and that conciseness is preferable to brevity *per se*. The instructor is constantly in dubious battle against such jargon as "utilize" for "use." Technical prose at its best must be precise, austere, supple, crisp, cheerful, and steady and relaxed in movement; it is certainly not impossible that, say, a change notice recording the replacement of a cast iron component of a geared pump with one of magnesium alloy may achieve, within its own limits, a liteness and resonance of prose through clean skilful presentation of pertinent matter as clearly and as well as possible.

A talented technical editor has said, "In a good poem, no word can be changed; the same should be true of a good report, even though not perhaps to the same degree." The engineering or scientific writer must be as sensitive to language as the poet, or as the novelist, but to a different end. His job is the limitation of connotation, ambiguity, and the penumbræ of meaning, not their amplification. A costly maintenance brochure, for example, is worthless unless it is totally and precisely understood by all who may read it. Perhaps an analogy may be illuminating: a tool designer for one of the large aircraft companies, having completed drawings for a machine tool, was asked by his lead man if the part to be machined could be put in backwards. Upon being told that the designer had not

considered this, the lead man replied, "Always remember that if it's possible for some adjectival thus-and-such to put the part in backwards, upside-down, or wrong end first, he'll do it." It is the function of the engineering writing instructor to train students to write so competently that no one reading their reports will "put the part in backwards."

The investigative paper not only familiarizes the student with the leading journals in what will be his profession, but acquaints him with the various styles of documentation. Some work is put in with illustrative techniques; diagrams of any sort must be as self-explanatory as possible and should serve as augmentation of the text rather than appurtenance. The descriptive report is introduced by a class period given to the description of either some simple object or some artifact the students have never seen. During the last weeks, while the student writes the investigative paper out of class, class periods are devoted to discussion of a selected book; Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* and Whyte's *The Organization Man* have both been highly successful, and there are available several first-rate collections of scientific essays.

This particular approach to the problems of a college engineering writing course has been conditioned by the fortuity of considerable instructorial background as a pre-engineering undergraduate with a mathematics minor and as an employee in various capacities with several large industries; the students seem to respect an instructor who can talk their own language. Probably the best tribute paid to the success of the course is the often-voiced student comment that it is the only course they have taken where they do three units' work for two units' credit, but that they like it and wish there were more.

SCIENCE AND GRAMMAR: A COMPROMISE

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Though most of our students belong to the enlightened jet age of scientific progress, there are others who labor on their weekly themes as if they were still living

in the dark ages of comma faults, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. I have taught these "medievalists" in Remedial English classes and, surprisingly enough, in

Technical Writing classes. The problem posed in teaching these students how to recognize and avoid the three mortal sins of composition was not solved, for me, until I devised a system of grammatical notation that was quickly grasped by students because it appealed to their scientifically inclined imaginations. The basis of the appeal seems to be the scientific appearance of the notation, and the conciseness of presentation which the system of notation facilitates. The suggestion that some language problems could be described as *structures* and expressed by means of *formulas* immediately attracted students, who seemed to feel that by means of these new "equations" they could eliminate important sources of error in their themes as if by a simple wave of their slide rules.

The system to be described in detail below rests on at least two difficult assumptions: that pupils can be taught what is meant by the term "substantives" (s), and that they can be taught the difference between finite verbs (fv) and infinite verbs (iv). Granted these beginnings, the formula for a clause is presented:¹ $(s + fv) = IC$, where (s) is a substantive, (fv) is a finite verb, and (IC) is the symbol for an independent clause. It should be added, of course, that there may be any number of (s) and any number of (fv) in the formula without violating the equation. The symbol for an indefinite exponent ($-^n$) may be conveniently used for this purpose: $(s^n + fv^n) = IC$.

The next step is also a compromise between the descriptive, structural approach of linguistics and the older, conventional grammar, for it depends upon the student's knowledge of subordinate conjunctions, relative pronouns, and, for a fine point, a knowledge of the correlative conjunctions.² These conjunctions and pronouns are

classed, descriptively as "crutch words" because of their effect on the independence of a clause—a matter which will be discussed below. This step involves the definition of a dependent clause, which is formulated as follows: $cw (s^n + fv^n) = DC$, where (cw) is any crutch word, and (DC) is the symbol for a dependent clause. Now that an independent clause and a dependent clause have been described by formulas, it may be recalled, perhaps as something welling from the collective unconscious, that "a group of words, containing a subject and predicate, expressing a complete thought, and capable of standing alone,"³ once upon a time, defined a sentence. It is at this point that even the least mathematically inclined student recalls that "equals are equal to equals" and concludes that $(s + fv)$ stands alone; whereas $cw (s + fv)$ and $(s + iv)$ cannot stand alone—hence the class of words described as "crutch" words that renders (IC) incapable of standing alone, as a cripple requiring crutches cannot stand alone. It is now easily deduced that IC must equal S, where (S) is a simple sentence.

It is fairly simple from this point to recapitulate and then proceed to formulate a description of the different kinds of sentences:

1. $(s^n + fv^n) = IC$
2. $cw (s^n + fv^n) = DC$
3. $IC = S$, that is, a simple sentence
4. $(IC + IC)^n = cd$, that is, a compound sentence
5. $(IC + DC)^n = cx$, that is, a complex sentence in normal order
6. $(DC^n + IC) = cx$, that is, a complex sentence in inverted order
7. $(IC + IC)^n + (IC + DC)^n = ccx$, that is a compound-complex sentence. A (ccx) equals, of course, any combination of arrangements of numbers of four, five, and six.

It may be suggested here that any structure not described by the formulas for sentences given above is not, in the formal conventional sense, a sentence, but a sentence fragment; the structure $(s + iv)$ is also a sentence fragment. In short, if any group of words cannot be analyzed as a structure described in formulas three through seven

¹Professor O. Willard has justly pointed out that my notation may be further abstracted and modified to conform with the notations of linguistics. Though I am indebted to his criticism, I prefer to retain my compromise notation for its greater mnemonic value and simplicity.

²One of a pair of correlative conjunctions when placed before an independent clause makes it a dependent clause: "He smokes" = IC, but "Either he smokes" = DC.

³Russell H. Barker, *The Sentence* (New York, 1939), p. 5.

above, that group of words is not a sentence, in the formal, conventional sense of the term.

To cope with the problem of run-on sentences and comma faults in their most prevalent, malignant forms, it is necessary to stress that the foregoing symbolization indicates logical relations of structures. The student must be impressed with the fact that the signs and symbols called language are just that, signs and symbols, and that their arrangement as such is meant to *signal* something. The signal must be clear and unambiguous. One of the signals in the preceding formulas that was not defined was the plus sign. It should be considered a variable, dependent for its meaning upon the specific formula in which it operates. In formulas one, two, and five above, the sign is, in fact, meaningless because it represents the nonexistent, indicating mere juxtaposition of the elements forming clauses. In formula number four, the plus sign stands for the following techniques of joining independent clauses to form a compound sentence:³

- a. + = a colon
- b. + = a semi-colon
- c. + = a semi-colon *and* conjunctive adverb *and* a comma
- d. + = a comma *and* coordinate conjunction

At this point, it may be explained how this system of notation helps to teach punctuation, particularly by attacking comma faults and run-on sentences. Using the compound sentence structure as an example, the teacher can easily underscore the mean-

ingfulness of the plus sign: it signals that one structure is being attached to another. The coupling of independent clauses to form a compound sentence is brought about in one of the four ways listed above, exactly as listed; for instance, independent clauses may be joined (+) not by a coordinate conjunction alone, not by a comma alone, but by a comma *and* a coordinate conjunction. When the comma is used alone, a comma fault results. When the coordinate conjunction is used alone, a run-on sentence results. The signal must be complete before it properly does its job. It should be interjected here, while on the subject of run-on sentences, that each (S), each (cd), each (cx), and each (ccx) must be followed by terminal punctuation.

In formula six, the plus sign equals a comma. In formula seven, the plus signs mean variously, structure-by-structure, what they mean in formulas four and six.

The virtue claimed for the foregoing system of notating grammar by means of descriptive formulas is that it works. It works particularly well, as one would expect, with students who are inclined to technology. Pre-medical students, engineering students, budding scientists of all kinds grasp the system quickly. Many a worthy student, excellent in all his studies except composition, seems to find in this notation of grammar a solution, partial or complete, to his grammatical difficulties. Remedial students appear to benefit from the notation because it is concise. The system, moreover, for all its apparent complexity upon first reading, is really quite as simple as it is concise. (After the separate parts are learned, it is possible to review the entire system on one blackboard.) The advantage of this symbolization is that it suggests a descriptive, structural approach to language without discarding conventional terminology, which is, after all, fairly common knowledge; furthermore, the use of formulas immediately appeals to the students of this scientific age, and goes a long way to convince them of the sign-symbol nature of language by emphasizing that grammar is an effort to signal logical relations.

³Of course, the conjunctive adverbs, coordinate, correlative, subordinate conjunctions, and relative pronouns as well as the meaning of the term "substantive" and the differences between finite and infinite verbs—all of these things—must be memorized, however old-fashioned memorizing may be. In keeping with the "scientific" atmosphere of the present approach, memorizing these necessary items is made more appealing for the student when he is reminded that he had to learn numbers before he could memorize multiplication tables, etc.

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THE DISHONEST TERM PAPER

EDGAR F. DANIELS

Assistant Professor, Bowling Green State University

Cheating on research papers, either by plagiarizing from printed sources or by receiving outside help in writing, does much to demoralize the whole student body. For the cynical attitude of many students toward their college experience is often due not so much to inefficient teaching as to carelessness in the control of written work, allowing the best grades to go to the most adroit cheaters. Though it is not easy to prevent cheating, the instructor must try to do so if his grading is to be respected. I should like to suggest some steps which will help curtail both plagiarism and that more difficult problem, the receiving of outside help.

I. PLAGIARISM

By "plagiarism" we usually mean the pretense that phrasing taken from a printed source is one's own. Since we are primarily concerned with evaluating composition skills, we are not likely to worry about plagiarism of ideas on the freshman level.

The first principle to be explained to a class is that the mere citation of sources does not justify the borrowing of phrasing without the use of quotation marks. A great many students do not seem to get this idea through their heads until a paper has been failed for violation, and therefore perhaps a written statement should be presented to them at the beginning of the course.

This statement should also explain the difference between properly and improperly converted phrasing, giving examples. Admittedly, the distinction can become very blurred, but usually the situation is clear-cut. A sentence repeated exactly or with the alteration of only a word or two is a plagiarism. Let us take for example a sentence from a printed source: "The pitcher is undoubtedly the most important member of a ball club."¹ To repeat this

sentence exactly would of course constitute plagiarism, but to change only a single phrase would in a lesser degree be plagiarism too; e.g., "The pitcher is undoubtedly the most important member on a baseball team," or "A pitcher is the most important member of a baseball club." Yet these sentences represent attempts to alter the form and, though objectionable, are not deserving of the same opprobrium as the exact quotation. Consider the following as a further degree in conversion: "The pitcher is unquestionably the most important player on a baseball team." I would accept this, even though the general sentence form is the same and several phrases reappear, for they are not "striking" or "original" phrases. On the other hand, I would demand quotation marks around "run-of-the-slope skiers" in the following typically *Times* sentence, even if all the rest of the sentence were changed: "To lure the run-of-the-slope skiers who are making skiing a big business the world over . . . , Portillo went under new management this year."²

The written statement might also raise the question of "unconscious plagiarism," which, though perhaps sinless, is blameworthy. The student charged with plagiarizing often retorts that he merely read the source and later composed statements based on his recollection. Thus he did not willfully plagiarize. This defense has some validity, especially if it occurs only here and there, but unconscious adoption of the phrasing of a source is not likely to occur over a broad area of the paper. And when an entire paragraph reproduces substantially the same phrasing as its source or when a full sentence is exactly the same, conscious plagiarism seems evident.

This written statement should include, finally, an explanation of the English department's horror when it discovers plagiarism. The air of amazement with which

¹Daniel E. Jessee, *Baseball* (1939), p. 11.

²"Up to Ski," *Time*, LXXIV (17 Aug. 1959), 34.

many students respond to an accusation of plagiarism is, I believe, often quite genuine. They see little difference between it and most of the other little subterfuges of life.

If these matters are explained by both a mimeographed statement and class discussion of examples, plagiarism is less likely to occur, but more to the present point, the student will be unable to protest later that he "was never told."

II. OUTSIDE HELP

How much outside help is legitimate? In the first place, we should recognize clearly that the question is not whether outside help may be beneficial to a student of composition, but whether it impairs the fairness and accuracy of the grade which he receives for the paper. Obviously, outside help can benefit the student; otherwise how justify having teachers? When is such help unjust? Few of us would be so dogmatic as to say it is utterly unfair to the other students to hand one's freshly written theme to one's roommate for appreciation, even if the roommate offers some generalized comments on its readability. In fact, the value of such interaction would seem quite to outweigh the slight influence of the outsider upon the grade. Most of us would even countenance the extension of the friend's comments to problems of particular paragraphs, or even to sentences which seem awkward. But where does this legitimate assistance shade into the improper? At the point where misspellings are pointed out? At the point where such misspellings are actually changed by the outsider? At the point where the outsider suggests an alternate expression or a reworking of the sentence, of the paragraph, of the paper? It is hard enough for the instructor to draw the line, and it is triply hard for the student, even if he tries to do so. The best policy, as I see it, is to emphatically forbid any outside help on a theme before it has been graded. Further, in my classes I ask that no outsider be allowed even to read the paper before it has been turned in, whether his intention is to criticize it or not. If the theme is typed, I require that the student do his own typing. It is hard to imagine a typist resisting the temptation to correct spelling where he recognizes an error.

It will be argued that I am naive if I expect such a rule to be observed. Only the rigorously honest will obey, goes this argument, and then they will be penalized in the race for grades. There are two answers to this. First, there is much greater chance of securing compliance with a restriction that is clear-cut and unmistakable than one which places such a burden upon the judgment and conscience of the student. Students seeking just the legitimate amount of aid are led to rationalize help that the instructor would regard as thoroughly improper. The sure result of any other approach than strict prohibition is to give the best grades to the papers which have had the best team of experts. The moderately honest student is likely to be dissuaded from cheating by the clear-cut prohibition, whereas he may actually be led into cheating if he is told that some degree of outside help is permissible. Secondly, though the willfully dishonest student will not be prevented from cheating by rules that cannot be enforced, he will be deprived, if caught, of the handy argument that his use of outside help had seemed to him moderate and unobjectionable according to the rules set down by the instructor.

Let us now suppose the use of outside aid has been categorically prohibited. How can the instructor be reasonably sure that a theme will not be lifted bodily from a file, or borrowed from a friend, or written by another student for money, or extensively revised by an outsider?

Some of these possibilities will be avoided if the instructor assigns a specific topic to each student, rather than letting him choose his own. The chance of finding a paper already written is reduced when a student is asked to discuss, for example, the question of responsibility in the collision of the *Stockholm* and the *Andrea Doria*. He may plagiarize, of course, or he may have the paper written for him, but the chances are slight that he will find a paper on this precise subject in any "file."

Secondly, if, instead of spreading the single research paper out over three or four weeks, the instructor allows not more than a week to each of several short papers, the chance of hiring a writer or enlisting

the help of a corrupt relative is considerably reduced, since the work would have to be done at the convenience of the outside writer.

Let us suppose now that in spite of these precautions a student who has hitherto earned *D's* and *F's* now turns in an *A* paper, not only clear of plagiarism but handling its source with superior skill. The instructor feels that outside help has been used. What can he do? I think the ultimate defense against the determined cheater, as well as the ultimate test of the ability of all composition students, must come in the form of writing impromptu themes in the relatively controlled conditions of the classroom. These themes should be spaced throughout the term and should be on topics narrow enough to avoid the "pre-written" theme yet general enough to permit each student to draw upon his own experience. Here the student is not able to use the talents of his girl friend, wife, or former high school teacher. He is entirely on his own, and the result will be a

much closer measure of his real writing ability than any out-of-class paper.

It may be protested, "What of the student who by sheer honest labor produces an *A* or *B* paper when his impromptu work rates *D* or *F*?" If such a person exists he is rare indeed. The more usual situation seems to be that students working alone do not raise the quality of their writings so dramatically. They may produce something a grade (or, rarely, two) above their customary writing, but beyond that I should be suspicious. But even supposing such a discrepancy exists between spontaneous and honestly revised writing, a truly accurate estimate of a person's writing ability must include not only what he is able to produce after six or seven revisions but also what he writes spontaneously. Therefore, I would so balance impromptu writing against the main research paper that the student's final grade in the course would not be very much higher than the ability indicated by his in-class themes.

MOTIVATING COLLEGE FRESHMEN TO SPELL PROPERLY

JAMES PARRISH

Associate Professor, Western Illinois University

Having used a list of spelling demons as a baseball bat to make college freshmen spell correctly, I was glad to see some recognition of these useful imps in the March 1959 issue of *College English*. In their article Dr. Edna L. Furness and Dr. Gertrude A. Boyd emphasized anew the inability of college students to spell. This particular reflection of students' semiliteracy is so sharp that many instructors in other areas, social science for one, evade the hours of deciphering required by essay examinations and substitute the objective test as a comfortable escape.

The problem of what to do for students who come to college unable to spell as well as many sixth-graders is an old one. One solution is to toss into the intellectual scrap heap those students who can't spell. And certainly it is tempting to adopt the attitude that colleges have no business teaching

grammar school subjects. This attitude is translated into theme standards that carry an automatic *F* for papers containing three (or four or five or six) misspelled words. One result of this drastic approach is that bad spellers use only those words they are reasonably sure they can spell—and their papers end up void of content or freshness of expression. The other is that they continue to fail Freshman Composition, *ad infinitum*. (One of the Government's top ordnance engineers failed composition eight times at a reputable technical school, mostly because he could not spell. Finally he graduated by passing a correspondence course.)

Some colleges, assuming that bad spellers are not otherwise complete dolts, go to the other extreme, setting up remedial programs. For an hour a week, students attend courses that work through the spelling

rules and the exceptions to them. Students are encouraged to work fifteen minutes a day on the rule of the week. Thus eventually they escape from "junior English" or the "laboratory." To be successful, such a remedial program must have some teeth in it, usually a requirement that the student pass the course before he can graduate. Tough, yes, but bad spelling is one deficiency that employers care about, as Dr. Furness and Dr. Boyd point out.

What approach do most college instructors use? First of all, they are pulled two ways. On the one hand, they feel that it is a little demeaning to be teaching spelling at all. But on the other, they feel as if they are shirking their duty when they say "If a student hasn't learned how to spell in twelve years, there's nothing I can do for him, except to give him a good solid *F* every week." But most of us, I suspect, approach spelling with a broad brush. If the freshman text summarizes the spelling rules, we touch on them, hoping that a little spelling knowledge will adhere to a surface that basically repels it.

Dissatisfied with the coverage of this particular broad brush and doubting that anyone except English teachers ever remembers spelling rules, I began, in the winter quarter last year, to search for some other way of getting freshmen to spell more accurately than they do now. The solution, employing one of the demon lists referred to by Dr. Furness and Dr. Boyd, combines motivation with a specific goal. Early in the first quarter of freshman composition I tell my students that unless they learn to spell at least 80 of the 100 most frequently misspelled words compiled by Thomas Clark Pollock (*College English*, November 1954), they will not pass the course. I then dictate the list of 100 words. Upon returning the papers, I go over the list, pointing out the trouble spots in the different words and stating a basic rule if it applies, as for example to *beginning*, *losing*, and *transferred*. But the responsibility for learning these words finally belongs to the student.

With this motivation, some striking improvements have occurred. One student who missed 60 words the first time cut his misses to 6 the second; another reduced his from 45 to 1; a third came down from

22 to 1. In a different section, an average student cut his errors from 41 to 1. Using the same procedure with summer-school students, I had the same kind of results: from 31 to 3, 41 to 0, 42 to 1, 56 to 14, etc.

To be sure, the cudgel approach seemed to work better with those who missed around 40 or less on the first try. Inevitably there appear to be some students who either have a psychological block on learning to spell or do not care enough to work on the list. The reduction from 60 to 6 was unusual for a student missing so many on the first try. For instance, one seemingly hopeless student, the only one who didn't improve, went from 60 on the first try to 62 on the second; a second student could reduce his errors only from 61 to 57. But the worst performer on the first attempt (71 misses) came down to 36 on the second. (One of his prize misspellings, "egsaduration" for *exaggeration*, was also misspelled in exactly the same way by another student from the same high school. I have been trying to find some significance in this ludicrous repetition, but cannot.)

If memorizing spelling lists were an end in itself, I would be inclined to agree with James McCrimmon when he states in *Writing with a Purpose* (page 532) that "an uncritical memorizing of spelling lists is not conspicuously effective." But still another benefit derived from this technique. I found working from this list reduced the number of errors made on themes. For example, while one student was reducing his errors on the spelling list from 33 to 12, he was likewise eliminating errors in his written work. Remember, this improvement occurred after only minimum attention to the reasons for misspelling the words on the list. Apparently the concrete goal of learning to spell 100 words, many of them sharing similarities with thousands of other words, motivated students to become interested in spelling. One athlete, a notoriously poor speller with two failures in Freshman Composition already behind him, began to carry a dictionary in his pocket constantly. Best of all, no one failed solely on his inability to learn 80 out of the 100 words.

As we all know, there is no panacea for bad spelling. And superficially viewed, permitting 20 misses may seem extraordinarily

high. But when one considers that on the first attempt by 77 students that approximately two out of five missed over a third of the words and one out of seven missed over half of them and that the words, though common, are tricky, this standard is perhaps fairly realistic. At least I am encouraged enough by the success of this

approach to recommend it for those who have neither the time nor the inclination to make Freshman Composition into a spelling course but who are a little too conscientious not to offer the student some help on his spelling and who are not satisfied merely to pass the buck back to the grammar and junior-high schools.

COLLEGE-WIDE ENGLISH IMPROVEMENT

NORMAN V. McCULLOUGH

Professor and Chairman, Languages and Literature, Savannah State College

In discussing the possibility of college-wide English improvement with several scholars and teachers at the December (1958) meeting of the MLA, I was told that such improvement often leads to considerable prescriptivism and frequently little or no success. As Chairman of the Committee on College-Wide English Improvement at Savannah State College, I thus undertook the committee work with considerable misgiving. I had read in *College English* (Nov. 1958) the article "Some Faculty-Wide Help for the English Teacher" by James B. Stronks. The yellow slip seemed like a good idea, though again it sounded like prescription. The committee, however, agreed to try the method. A student member of the committee suggested that the yellow slips be made pink slips, so thereupon we instituted the "pink-slip method" of notifying students that the English in their papers was unacceptable for several reasons. The reasons were listed in generally the same manner as outlined by Stronks.

As was to be expected, the faculty at first approved the idea and showed some interest and enthusiasm; but, as time went on, it was learned that most instructors simply put the pink slips into some obscure drawer and forgot about them, thus depriving the student of any benefit that might have been derived from pointing out to him, in this general way, his weakness in language usage. Further, when a questionnaire concerning the value of the pink slip was distributed to approximately seventy-five instructors, only ten replied. Though the

slips were not introduced until the first of May (due to complications in securing them), their use did not seem widespread. Of the ten respondents to the questionnaire, 50% had used none. The other respondents indicated that only approximately 140 pink slips had been used, though 5,000 slips had been distributed. The respondents did feel, however, that use of the pink slips should be continued. Probably over a longer period of time and with the complete co-operation of the faculty, the effectiveness of the "pink slip" can be better evaluated.

As part of the work of the committee, in an effort to stimulate a greater language consciousness, (1) films were shown on language usage at a regular faculty meeting; (2) a student representative wrote an article on language usage for the student newspaper; and (3) a list of errors made by students and staff members was compiled and distributed.

The last item caused considerable consternation among the faculty when the list was presented. The list consisted largely of errors in oral language usage, but as none of the informants had portable tape recorders, the information gathered could not be documented with irrefutable proof. Most persons did not believe (1) that faculty members could make such ludicrous errors, (2) that the students or staff members who submitted the listed errors were reliable or good informants, and (3) that the list represented "academic or scholarly" research (though no member of the committee claimed that such was the case).

Generally, it was felt that to list the errors of instructors was professionally bad, and that the people in the community and students in general should not be made conscious of the errors that instructors make. One faculty member intimated that the administration could easily use such information to "brick-bat" the offending member of the staff.

But the upshot of these various activities is that the faculty and student body seemingly have been made aware temporarily, if not permanently, of the value of correct

language usage. Many students have inquired about courses in grammar or means of improving their language usage, and one staff member, it is reported, counted 158 errors in one term paper. For the "research-conscious" person on the staff, the committee proposes to examine and document all errors in language usage found in letters, memoranda, notes, published material, and so forth that are written and circulated by individuals and offices on the campus. Though the committee may be indulging in prescriptivism, some salutary effects seem to be resulting.

LETTER FROM A TRIPLE-THREAT GRAMMARIAN

GEORGE W. FEINSTEIN

Pasadena (California) City College

Dear sir; you never past me in grammer because you was prejudice but I got this here athaletic scholarship any way. Well, the other day I finely get to writing the rule's down so as I can always study it if they ever slip my mind.

1. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.

2. Just between you and I, case is important.

3. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.

4. Watch out for irregular verbs which has crope into our language.

5. Don't use no double negatives.

6. A writer mustn't shift your point of view.

7. When dangling, don't use participles.

8. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.

9. Don't write a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it.

10. About sentence fragments.

11. In letters themes reports articles and stuff like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.

12. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.

13. Its important to use apostrophe's right.

14. Don't abbrev.

15. Check to see if you any words out.

16. In my opinion I think that an author when he is writing shouldn't get into the habit of making use of too many unnecessary words that he does not really need in order to put his message across.

17. In the case of a business letter, check it in terms of jargon.

18. About repetition, the repetition of a word might be real effective repetition—take, for instance, Abraham Lincoln.

19. As far as incomplete constructions, they are wrong.

20. Last but not least, lay off clichés.

Councilletter

English Meets the Challenge

JOSEPH MERSAND

Chairman, Jamaica (N. Y.) High School; President of NCTE, 1959. The article is condensed from Dr. Mersand's presidential address at the 1959 Convention.

Thoreau, in one of his more prophetic moments in *Walden*, exclaimed: "There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the roots." If he were alive today, how satisfied he would be with the wisdom of this remark: for how many examples do we have of attempts to find solutions to some of our most persistent social, political, and educational problems by hacking at their branches rather than striking at their roots! Thus we find experts, semi-experts, and pseudo-experts inundating us with easy solutions to such difficult problems as juvenile delinquency, labor and management strife, slums, cultural improvement or deterioration, war and peace, and education.

It used to be said that in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king. But today, regardless of one's sight or insight, one can become an expert and win the nation's headlines by the simple expedient of loud utterances repeated often enough. The truth about any of these large and intricate problems is ever-fleeting and difficult to catch. Occasionally some hardy souls, after much careful study and research, may discern a slight shadow of the truth, but they do not make the headlines.

In our own field of English, we have long witnessed a veritable army of hackers at the branches compared to the isolated striker at the roots. As compared to the former, the latter is like a still, small voice whispering in the wilderness. For how difficult it is to make valid judgments about the practices and achievements of our discipline!

When our schools opened their doors in September 1959, there were 42,700,000 stu-

dents. College added another 3,780,000, bringing the grand total to 46,480,000 (*School Life*, XLII, 26). Many of them will be studying or will be exposed to some kind of English, or in elementary schools, English Language Arts. Who is there so well informed of the facts and so wise in their interpretation that he can speak authoritatively about our objectives, our methods, our materials, and our evaluation of our accomplishments?

Yet difficult as this assignment is, there has been no dearth of authorities The game is endless! English is too easy, English is too difficult; English is watered down, English is so rich in curricular areas that teachers can't cover the material, children can't or won't read, students are reading better than ever; students can't speak, children can't stop speaking, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Where, then, is the truth, and how do we know where we are? For, difficult as the truth may be to ascertain, it must reside somewhere. It shall be my humble purpose in this paper to explore with you a bit through the jungle of inaccuracies, glib generalizations, and downright falsehoods to the clearing of truth as near as we can arrive at it. And this truth shall, I hope and pray, make us all proud to be in our profession and show us ways in which we may carry our standards forward to ever-increasing victories over ignorance, indifference, and sheer human inertia.

English, as I see it, is indeed meeting the challenges which grow more numerous and more formidable each year. In this paper, however, I shall confine myself to discussion of eight challenges: (1) the importance of English today, (2) the description and

delimitation of our discipline, (3) articulation at all levels of instruction, (4) meeting individual differences, (5) understanding the nature of the student and his learning processes, (6) accomplishment in reading, (7) accomplishment in writing, and (8) teacher training.

Challenge Number 1: How Important Is Our Subject? In a survey which I conducted recently among five hundred distinguished educators, businessmen, civil service executives, librarians, deans of law schools, legislators, judges, editors, and publishers, I was impressed by the number of times they have called English the most important subject in the curriculum . . . both for self-development and for success in any and every life occupation. This seems to me the first of the many challenges that we have had to face in the comparatively short span of our history in American education—the importance of our subject in the eyes of the public.

Challenge Number 2: The Description and Delimitation of Our Discipline. Speech was a discipline long before ours. Aristotle wrote about it in Greek; Cicero and Quintilian in Latin. Speech is not confined to any one language or to any one geographical area. English, on the contrary, as to its content, has ever been in a state of flux. Thirty-five years ago, C. H. Ward asked *What Is English?* and we have been trying to find the answer ever since. We have tried to meet the challenge by one of the most massive curriculum development operations in the history of American education, in which thousands of teachers, supervisors, administrators, and librarians in almost every state of the Union have been working together to define their aims, the scope and sequence of their subject matter, the materials, and means for evaluation. In one of our panels tomorrow, Arno Jewett of the U. S. Office of Education will outline the main trends in some 250 courses of study that have appeared in the past twenty-five years.¹ At the 14th Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

last March there were 117 bulletins exhibited on various aspects of the Language in kindergarten through senior high school from almost half the states. And these were produced in the last year or two!² Critics who are constantly reminding us that we don't teach writing, or reading, or good handwriting, might well spend a little time with these curriculum bulletins to see what is actually being planned for today's children. Many of them represent long years of classroom experience, action, research, and experimentation. Thus we are meeting our second challenge through conferences with colleagues, through exchanges of information and experiences, through deliberations as to the definition, delimitation, and description of our area, and through publication and dissemination of our findings at the local, district, city and state level.

Challenge Number 3: Articulation. The manner in which the modern curriculum in English is prepared today represents another challenge that has been met—the challenge of articulation. More and more teachers at all levels of the educational ladder are realizing that language growth is a continuous process that is not affected by such artificial boundaries as a diploma from an elementary, junior, or senior high school. The days when the college teacher of English could be content with merely criticizing the efforts or achievements of the secondary schoolteacher and the secondary schoolteacher content with criticizing the teachers in the lower schools are rapidly passing into limbo. More and more, teachers of all levels are meeting together at district or state conferences as they are meeting here this week-end to discover common problems and to search for common solutions.

On the national scale, we have for the past twelve years noted the fruits of such cooperation in our own Commission on the Curriculum. The comparatively new Commission on the Profession is also organized by vertical representation and is beginning at this meeting to put into practice some of the suggestions of earlier deliberations.

¹Arno Jewett, *English Language Arts in American High Schools*, Bulletin 1958, No. 13, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1959).

²*Curriculum Materials 1959*, a list of materials exhibited at the A.S.C.D. Annual Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, March 1-5, 1959.

You have all by this time become aware of the *Basic Issues in the Teaching of English*, which resulted from a series of conferences in 1958 among twenty-eight distinguished representatives from various parts of the country and from all levels of instruction. There has been a great deal of interest aroused as a result of the wide distribution of this document, and various plans are being made to try out hypothetical articulated programs which are designed to solve some of the problems raised by the conference.

It is significant to me that in the November 1959 issue of *College English*, two articles deal with attempts to promote greater articulation: one by James Lynch on efforts in California; the other by Elaine T. Smith of Massachusetts. Furthermore, such publications as the *Joint Statement on Freshman English in College and High School Preparation* (Indiana), *Freshman English at the Ohio State University*, *Standards in Freshman Rhetoric at the University of Illinois*, *Report of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools of the University of California* are important indications of the need felt for closer relationships between high school and college programs in English. . . .

Challenge Number 4: Individual Differences. The fourth challenge is one that has troubled educators for several thousand years—individualization of instruction. Confucius probably put it as clearly as any one since:

There are four common errors in education which the teacher must be aware of. Some students try to learn too much or too many subjects, some learn too little or too few subjects, some learn things too easily and some are too easily discouraged. These four things show that individuals differ in their mental endowments and only through a knowledge of the different mental endowments can the teacher correct their mistakes. A teacher is but a man who tries to bring out the good and remedy the weakness of his students.¹

The Council, from its inception, has been concerned with provision for individual differences, and every one of its great re-

visions of the English curriculum has increased our knowledge. Yet there have always been those menacing obstacles of oversized classes, excessive teacher load, and enervating nonteaching duties that have robbed teachers of their energy and time to meet the needs of their students. Our suggestions have been many: (1) Multiple track courses that would achieve a modicum of homogeneity (complete homogeneity, of course, is impossible). (2) Smaller classes to permit more face-to-face conferences between teacher and pupil. (3) Individualized reading and writing programs. (4) A rich program of extra-curricular activities, such as publications, dramatic performances, and similar enriching experiences for the individually gifted child. (5) Adequate materials of all kinds to meet the needs of individuals. (6) Teacher training that would equip our teachers with the proper understandings and skills.

We would be the first to admit that we have a long way to go toward a desirable individualization of instruction. But our philosophy, at least, our curriculum guides, and our methodology are pointing in that direction. As long as the average high school teacher of English has to meet 175-200 students a day, individualization may be more of a dream than a reality. No one expects a doctor to meet and treat 175-200 patients a day, or a lawyer to meet 175-200 clients a day. Yet somehow this system has grown up in our secondary schools, and we have to utilize every means at our command to educate the public and the boards of education that an investment of taxes to reduce class size and teacher load can be the wisest investment in our nation's future.

When a missile misfires at Cape Canaveral and costs the taxpayer thousands of dollars in sheer wasted manpower and material, nobody seems to object. It is necessary for the present or future defense of our land; and military men, like teachers, learn from their failures. When the Board of Education of a large city was considering recently the reduction of class size and teacher load in high school English classes to conform with the Conant recommendations, the proposal was turned down because it would have cost \$2,000,000. That

¹The *Wisdom of Confucius*, trans. Lin Yutang, quoted by Claude M. Fuess and Emory S. Basford, *Unseen Harvests* (1947), p. 342.

would probably be enough to purchase a missile or two, but who knows what might have been accomplished in that great city if the resolution had gone through?

Despite the tremendous handicaps under which we have been working, we have managed to penetrate more and more into the mysteries of individual differences and have been doing more than the public gives us credit for.

Challenge Number 5: Understanding the Student and His Learning Processes. The challenge of individual differences is closely allied to the challenge of language growth and language teaching to achieve the greatest possible growth. We know much more about human motivation and what makes students want to read and write and speak well. When English grammar was first introduced into our academies and later into the public high schools, it was most often defended for its disciplinary value. The first secondary schools were Latin Grammar schools and the disciplinary function was primary. It was not surprising when English departments were added in the academies for English grammar to be defended as just as effective for training the mind as was Latin. One never heard that the study of English grammar would enable the student to read or write better. I do not intend to precipitate the battle of the grammarians here, or the battle of the grammarians vs. the structural linguists. But this we will all accept: we learn the skills and mechanics not as disciplinary factors but as means for more effective and more graceful expression.

We know a good deal about the necessity of commitment on the part of the student if he is to learn effectively; about the role of purpose; about the relationship between mental activity and emotional and physical states; about what makes learning worthwhile. Yes, there is a great deal that we have to learn in all of these areas, but we are gradually crossing the frontiers.

In a recent article a political scientist lamented the fact that, although the teaching of political science was probably one of the oldest professions, there was not a single manual to teach it. He made out a strong case for the preparation of such a

manual on methods.⁴ The teacher of English need feel no lack in this area. Our discipline is probably the richest from the point of view of methodology and books written on methodology. Since B. A. Hinsdale wrote his *Teaching the Language Arts* in 1896 to Dwight F. Burton's *Literature Study in the High Schools* in 1959 there have been over fifty texts on methods, written by the great leaders in our field from Charles Swain Thomas, Lou La Brant, John De Boer, Dora V. Smith, Lucia B. Mirrieles, Reed Smith, down to our own J. N. Hook. This multitude of methods books represents, in my opinion, the richness in imagination and depth of knowledge of the leaders of our profession as they grappled with the manifold problems of our discipline. I doubt whether any other area in the curriculum has been so richly endowed.

We have come a long way from the teaching described by William Lyon Phelps in his *Autobiography* when he began his teaching career in 1892:

In the traditional teaching at Yale, formality was the rule. Nearly all the members of the faculty wore dark clothes, frock coats, high collars; in the classroom their manners had an icy formality; humor was usually absent, except occasional irony at the expense of the dull student. It was quite possible to attend a class three hours a week for a year, and not have even the remotest concept of the personality of the man behind the desk. The teachers seemed to believe this was the only method by which discipline could be enforced and maintained.⁵

At all levels of the educational ladder today we have masters of teaching who not only have control of their disciplines but of their students as well, without having to rely upon either fancy costumes or repressions. Such charming autobiographies of great English teachers as Esther Cloudman Dunn's *The Pursuit of Understanding*, Bliss Perry's *And Gladly Teach*, and Mary Ellen Chase's *A Goodly Fellowship* reveal that teaching the humanities may also be a human and humane experience.

⁴Arnold A. Rogow, "Teachmanship in Political Science: Some Preliminary Notes," *Audience*, VI (Autumn 1959), 79.

⁵William Lyon Phelps, *Autobiography with Letters* (1939), pp. 281-282.

Challenge Number 6: Accomplishment in Reading. The challenge of accomplishment always confronts us. Does Johnny really read? Can Jane write? I shall never forget my professor of freshman chemistry, the great and good Dr. Hill, who used to impress us by stating that if all the research on the benzol compounds were collected, it would fill the lecture hall. Sometimes I feel that if all the comments about Johnny and Jane's readings today were collected, the pile might easily fill a lecture hall, but that our profession might well be served if it were all consigned to the flames. Perhaps more nonsense and misinformation has been bruited about by partially informed or totally misinformed critics on the subject of the reading of today's children and young adults than about any phase of the curriculum. Who can really speak for the 46,800,000 students in our schools and colleges? Certainly I would not pretend to, but I have ascertained certain facts which are most encouraging to me, and will, I trust, be encouraging to you. First, as to whether our children and young adults are reading better or worse books than those of a generation ago. It occurred to me that the two groups of persons that would be most qualified to answer this question were the librarians and book publishers. What follows is a summary of their answers.

To the question "Are our High School and College Students reading more good books than before?" there were 48 replies from librarians in cities of 100,000 or more. Thirty-nine librarians were of the opinion that they were. Only two gave an unqualified negative reply. Statistics showing a marked increase in books withdrawn by children and young adults were supplied by librarians from Cincinnati, Dayton, Evansville, Kansas City, Milwaukee, New Orleans, New Bedford (Mass.), New York City, Philadelphia, Reading, Savannah, and Utica. My conclusions, based on a study of their replies are: (1) In general, the ratio of total circulation to population is more favorable now than in 1938 or 1928. (2) The percentage of non-fiction books borrowed has grown in recent years to a point where, in many cases, more non-fiction books are circulated than fiction books. (3) Young people are taking an ever-

increasing share of total circulation in our libraries.

These statistics, admittedly limited and incomplete, are indicative of a change in the qualitative and quantitative reading habits of the American people. And the conclusions indicate that this movement is only the beginning, that libraries can expect a spiraling circulation of books, especially of nonfiction volumes. In addition, the overwhelming opinion of the nation's librarians is that young people are reading more and better books now than ever before. . . .

But, are our students mastering the reading skills as well as reading many books? In his Annual Report of 1957-1958 to the Trustees, Hollis E. Caswell, President of Teachers College, wrote:

The truth is that there is ample factual evidence that achievement in American schools has been gradually improving rather than deteriorating. Numerous research studies in individual school systems and on a wider basis have shown this to be the case. It is not my purpose here to review and appraise this evidence but I shall cite certain illustrations of it.

During the past year Professor Arthur I. Gates of Teachers College restandardized his elementary school reading tests which have been in use for many years. He found that in a period of twenty-five years elementary school pupils of equivalent age and intelligence have improved significantly in reading achievement. Gains in the primary years are small, but by grade six the gains are substantial. This tendency toward improvement is consistent with the findings of other studies. Appreciably raising the nation-wide level of achievement in reading during the elementary school period is a highly important accomplishment.

At the University of Chicago, Mr. Benjamin S. Bloom, the college examiner, in 1955 determined new norms for high school levels of general competence in such areas as English, mathematics, science, and social studies which are used by the United States Armed Forces Institute and which were previously based on 1943 attainments. In every area, the competence of high school seniors in 1955 exceeded, on the average, the competence of those who were seniors in 1943.

At the University of Illinois, Mr. Earl C. Seyler, University Recorder, compared the records of the freshman class of 1949 with those of entering classes of 1935, 1936, and 1937. He found that in every college in the univer-

sity the more recent high school graduates made higher grade-point averages. It is reported that entrance requirements during this period were not raised." . . .

Challenge Number 7: The Challenge of Written Composition. . . . *The New York Times* for October 29, 1959 carried a story indicating that "as a result of demands by colleges that freshmen show more proficiency in English, the College Entrance Examination Board approved plans yesterday to include essay writing as part of its entrance tests." At the same time, it established a Commission on English to determine what is achieved in secondary schools and what is expected by colleges. . . .

Of seventy-nine college presidents who replied to a questionnaire about the competence in English of recent graduates from high school, thirty-nine recommended more time for written composition—the recommendation made most frequently. The November 1959 issue of the *Atlantic* has no less than three articles on the teaching of writing. I think that we must face the fact that the teaching of written composition has always been a most difficult task and that as the classes have become larger and the non-teaching burdens heavier, the average teacher has found it difficult to keep ahead. Henry Chauncey in his article, "The Plight of the English Teacher," puts the case well: "The average English teacher meets 175 students daily in five classes. If he should assign one paper a week in each class, he would then spend four hours a night seven nights a week

and most of Saturday and Sunday afternoons just correcting papers."

What is our profession doing to meet this challenge? More, I assure you, than just not marking papers. In the first place, locally and nationally, we have been battling for smaller class size, long before Dr. Conant began carrying our banner. William J. Dusel of San Jose State College, in a report which gained wide currency, long ago advocated a teacher load of no more than 100 students and four classes. Last year, the resolutions of NCTE recommending this maximum teacher load were printed and widely distributed. In California, under the leadership of Richard Worthen of Diablo Valley College, a most stimulating document was prepared and disseminated to administrators and the lay public explaining why the reduction of class size is necessary in the secondary schools if we are to survive and do our job. Here and there one hears of communities enlightened enough to be willing to try the Conant recommendations, and the results are most encouraging. . . .

Challenge Number 8: Teacher Training. My last challenge is that of teacher training. Although we all feel that teachers of other subject areas should take some responsibility for the written and oral expression of our students, that is not the same as saying that every teacher can teach English. We have long advocated that teachers of English at all levels must be adequately prepared to teach this most difficult and most important of all subjects. To meet the requirements, we have recommended a good general education, solid grounding in subject matter, and educational courses that will equip the prospective teacher to face his daily, multitudinous problem. In this regard, the Council's Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification, under the dynamic leadership of Donald Tuttle and more recently Eugene E. Slaughter, has performed admirably for the profession. Thanks to their efforts and that of others, we find that certification requirements to teach English have been upgraded in many states. A publication prepared by this com-

^{*}*The Attack on American Schools*, from the Annual Report to the Trustees 1957-1958, Teachers College, Columbia University (1958), p. 5. See also Benjamin S. Bloom and Charles R. Statler, "Changes in the States on the Tests of General Educational Development from 1943 to 1955," *The School Review*, LXV (Summer 1957), 204-221; Benjamin S. Bloom, "The 1955 Normative Study of the Tests of General Educational Development," *The School Review*, LXIV (Mar. 1956), 110-124; E. C. Seyler, "A Comparison of the Scholastic Records of the Freshman Class of 1949 with Those of the Combined Classes of 1935-36-37," *College and University*, XXVII (Oct. 1951), 90-105.

^{*}Henry Chauncey, "The Plight of the English Teacher," *Atlantic*, CCIV (Nov. 1959), 123.

mittee will soon appear which will do much more to acquaint us with the factors involved in teaching our subject at all levels and the kind of training necessary to achieve our goal. It is but fitting that at this very conference there will be an invitation colloquium attended by some of our outstanding teacher-trainers which for several days will explore some of their common problems.

The accomplishments of but the single year 1959 are significant. From the annual report of our Committee on the Preparation and Certification of Teachers of English, we learn of the following advances: (1) Alabama has raised the English major from 24 to 30 semester hours. (2) Colorado's Legislative Council has ordered a two-year study of certification, which may result in improvement. (3) Idaho's Advisory Committee on Certification has recommended that the State Board of Education raise the minimum requirement in English from 15 to 20, and make the major 30

semester hours. (4) Kentucky has raised the minimum from 18 to 24 semester hours, under pressure from the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English. (5) Pennsylvania is up to 36 semester hours for a competence in English, speech, dramatics, and journalism, after much work by the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English. (6) Utah's Board of Education is considering a revision that will require four years of college, including a major or minor in the field taught for the initial certificate, and within five years, a fifth year of college which will give additional training in English for the English teacher.

These, then, are some of the significant challenges which our profession has faced and met boldly and creatively. Some have plagued us since our very beginning. Others are looming on the horizon. Yet we can be proud of our victories in our battle for national literacy and humane enlightenment. . . .

NCTE COLLEGE SECTION: 1960 NOMINATIONS

In May, Council members of the College Section will receive mail ballots for electing two members of the Section Committee and two Directors of the Council to represent the Section. In accordance with the requirements of the NCTE Constitution, the names of the persons chosen by the Nominating Committee are printed below. Additional nominees may be named by a petition signed by fifteen members of the Council.

College Section Committee

(Two to be elected)

Gordon Wilson, *Miami University (Ohio)*
Robert Gorrell, *University of Nevada*
Autrey Nell Wiley, *Texas Woman's University*
Edward Gordon, *Yale University*

Directors Representing College Section

(Two to be elected)

Martin Steinmann, *University of Minnesota*
Donald Emery, *University of Washington*
Margaret Blickle, *Ohio State University*
Maurice Rider, *State Teachers College, Indiana, Pennsylvania*

College English Advisers

One person is to be elected in each of the following categories:

Medieval: Robert Lumiansky, *Tulane University*

Renaissance: William Frost, *University of California at Santa Barbara*; Wilfred Jewkes, *Oberlin College*

World Literature: Maynard Mack, *Yale University*

Seventeenth Century: Rosemund Tuve, *University of Connecticut*; Ralph Condee, *Pennsylvania State University*

Fiction: Frederick Hoffman, *University of Wisconsin*

Teaching of Literature: Frederick Bracher, *Pomona College*; John Sherwood, *University of Oregon*

Linguistics: Archibald Hill, *University of Texas*; Paul Roberts, *San Jose State College*

Communication: James McCrimmon, *University of Illinois*; Richard Beal, *Boston University*

Curriculum: Harold Martin, *Harvard University*

This year's Nominating Committee consisted of John Gerber, *State University of Iowa*; Henry Sams, *Pennsylvania State University*, and Glenn Leggett, *University of Washington*, chairman.

Current English Forum

Ain't AGAIN

JEAN MALMSTROM

Associate Professor, Western Michigan University

The blanket statement in many textbooks that *ain't* is an "illiteracy," "barbarism," or "vulgarism" oversimplify the complex facts of its usage as revealed by the Linguistic Atlas evidence collected in New England, the Middle and South Atlantic States, the North Central States, and the Upper Midwest.¹ *Ain't* has been investigated in its three different contexts: (1) as an alternate present negative form of *be* in sentences like "I am not going to hurt him"; (2) as an alternate present negative form of *have* in sentences like "I haven't done it"; and (3) as an alternate first person singular present negative interrogative form of *be* in sentences like "I'm right, am I not?"

In the first context, except in and around New York City, where all the informants use *I'm not*, *ain't* is used in all areas by a few cultivated speakers and many high school graduates. In Atlas terminology therefore, *ain't* in the first context is "popular" usage; that is, it is characteristic of the speech of persons representing the middle level of education in their respective communities. Further, *ain't* in this context is not "expanding"; that is, its use is not increasing through adoption by cultivated speakers.

In the second context, "I haven't done it," approximately the same kind of distribution is found, except that Eastern speakers who use *ain't* in this context generally use *haven't* also. An old-fashioned form, *hain't* likewise occurs in this context. Apparently speakers who say both *ain't* and *hain't* usually employ *ain't* to mean *am not*

and *hain't* to mean *have not*. In this context, as in the first context, *ain't* is popular usage, not expanding.

In the third context, the Atlas shows that a large majority of the high school graduates in all areas say *ain't I*. Of the cultivated informants, about 20% in New England, about 35% in the Middle and South Atlantic States, and about 73% in the North Central States use *ain't I*, although no college graduate in the Upper Midwest does so. The cultivated speakers who employ *ain't I*, however, almost always use another form also. Generally this form is *am I not*, except in the North Central States where no college graduate uses it. *Aren't I* occurs with some frequency in New England and the Upper Midwest, but rarely elsewhere. *Amm't I* is not used by any Atlas informant. In Atlas terminology, *ain't* in the third context is standard in the North Central States, and strongly popular and expanding elsewhere except in the Upper Midwest.

We must always remember that the Atlas investigates only speech and offers no data on written English. However, since Fries reports no instance of *ain't* in the more than three thousand letters he studied for his *American English Grammar*, we may safely conclude that *ain't* occurs predominantly in speech, not in writing. Therefore its usage may be accurately judged in the light of the Atlas records. We may well remember also that American usage is most adequately described in terms of five dimensions. Socio-educational, situational, methodological, temporal, and regional dimensions all are vital to a comprehensive view.² Awareness of these five dimensions

¹The Atlas facts are presented in full by E. Bagby Atwood in *A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States* (Ann Arbor, Univ. of Michigan Press, 1953) and by Virginia G. McDavid in her Minnesota dissertation, "Verb Forms in the North Central States and the Upper Midwest" (1956).

²For a full discussion of these five dimensions of current American English, see Jean Malmstrom, "Linguistic Atlas Findings versus Textbook Pronouncements on Current American Usage," *English Journal*, XLVIII (Apr. 1959), 191-198.

is especially enlightening in considering a usage like *ain't I*, which shows regional as well as social and educational differences. Its absence from cultivated speech in the Upper Midwest, where a large proportion of the population is foreign-born and has learned English principally from textbooks, may be an interesting example of the conservative influence of the schools upon the normal patterns of change implicit in the development of any living language.

An exhaustive analysis of elementary, secondary, and college freshman textbooks reveals that only about one text in five discusses *ain't I* apart from the other uses of *ain't*. As a rule, textbooks forbid *ain't* in all its contexts, either stating or implying that it is a social shibboleth. The few texts which discuss *ain't I* separately recognize unanimously that English lacks and needs a first person singular present negative interrogative contraction parallel to *isn't he (she, it)* and *aren't we (you, they)*. These texts usually discuss *am I not*, *amn't I*, *aren't I*, and *ain't I* as possible choices available to the speaker who has wandered unwarily into a syntactic trap like "I'm right . . ." and who wishes to end on an interrogative note. The textbooks' comments on these choices vary widely, perhaps because

of regional differences in their authors' backgrounds. For instance, *am I not* is said to be "correct," "stilted," or "school-marmish." *Amn't I* is said to be "hard to pronounce," "nonexistent," or "Irish." *Aren't I* is called "ungrammatical," "affected," "literary," "British usage gaining favor in the United States," or "British usage condemned by leading American authorities." *Ain't I* is said to be "wrong and usually avoided although accepted by some authorities," "historically and logically justifiable but not standard," "an uncultivated colloquial contraction," "universally condemned but needed in the language," or "the least objectionable use of *ain't*."

Truly, English needs a form like French's *n'est-ce pas* or German's *nicht wahr*. Historically, the language has always filled such needs. Today the schools are responsible for the teaching of the nationally standard form of written English and therefore inevitably retard the slow but incessant process of language change. However, as we teachers fulfill our professional duty to the standard written dialect, we may listen with interest to the linguistic grass grow.

Questions on usage should be sent to the chairman of the NCTE Committee on Current English, Professor Margaret M. Bryant, Department of English, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn 10, N. Y.

A Calendar Reminder
NCTE's Fiftieth Anniversary Convention
24-26 November 1960
Chicago

Rebuttal

A PLEA FOR RESEARCH

LOUIS R. WARD

Professor and Head, Department of Languages and Social Sciences, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

Gordon Smith's "Responses to Advanced Reading" (*College English*, Jan. 1959), if taken as advice to teachers that *this* kind of program will effectively teach reading and writing to "entering freshmen," is open to several obvious criticisms.

First, the sample. Twenty-two students, selected at random from those "who placed between the 75th and 85th percentiles in the English placement test." The sample is too small, for one thing; for another, it is not representative of "entering freshmen." Second, the control group. There wasn't

any. Third, the number of teachers involved. One. Fourth, the measures used. These were: grades given by the instructor, and opinions, apparently not anonymous, written by the students.

I write this note not in criticism of the program described and certainly not in criticism of Mr. Smith. I write it to readers of *CE* as a plea for mature, responsible experimentation. At present we know pitifully little about the comparative values of different methods of teaching English.

BEFORE THE AX FALLS

LOUIS R. WARD

The state of our profession is exemplified by an incident which occurred during the 49th Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English. In the College Section the final topic discussed was "The Elimination of Freshman English, At It Is Now Taught, from the College Curriculum." "Eliminate!" advocated one speaker. "Drastically change!" said the next. Someone asked from the floor: "What colleges or universities have eliminated Freshman English, and what were the results?" Neither the speakers nor, apparently, anyone else, could answer.

Doubtless one ought to eschew superlatives. English teachers may not be the most ignorant of all groups who profess an interest in reading and writing. But they do seem strangely allergic to the kind of read-

ing that would qualify them for conducting scientifically respectable educational research and to the kind of writing which would make the results of their research—scientific or otherwise—generally known.

According to "The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English," a supplement to *College English* for October 1959, "There is as much reason to believe that English teaching can be radically improved, given the right approaches to the problems and an effort of sufficient magnitude and strength, as there is to suppose that we can strengthen education in mathematics, science, and foreign languages."

Before the ax falls—the sovereign cure for all our ailments—couldn't we try some less bitter remedies?

(Note: "The speakers" referred to by Professor Ward were, of course, the authors of the lead articles in this issue, and the "Someone" who asked the question happened to be the editor. Professor Rice's later answer follows.)

A REJOINDER

WARNER G. RICE

Professor Ward's comment upon suggestions made at Denver for the revision of our practices in Freshman English is welcome, since it provides an opportunity to amplify one or two points. There is con-

siderable experience to support the view that something better can be substituted for Freshman English as it is now generally taught. In a number of colleges of high rank (e.g., Amherst) something very

different from the usual Freshman Composition has been offered with marked success; in others (e.g., Bard) no separate course in Freshman Composition appears in the curriculum. In some newly established colleges attached to mid-western universities (e.g., Michigan State University-Oakland, Wayne State University-Monticelli) there is no Freshman Composition course. Harvard on one coast and the University of California on the other have their "Subject A," and in the latter institution a Committee on Prose Improvement is showing what can be accomplished when responsibility for better writing becomes a university, rather than a departmental, affair. Professor Porter Perrin long ago demonstrated at Maine and Colgate how such an approach could be made successfully.

A correlation exists, naturally, between the need for required courses in communication skills and the admissions standards of an institution. It is likely that (as Mr. Bowles and others have predicted) the stratification of institutions of higher learning will become more and more pronounced during the next decade or so. Colleges and universities which have a highly selective admissions policy will gain in prestige, and

competition among applicants will become intense. As the need for better preparation is felt, Advanced Placement programs and other courses designed to stimulate the ablest will multiply. The probable effect will be to raise the level of competence generally. In the better institutions there will be, accordingly, little need for Freshman Composition.

To be sure, many students will be accepted by colleges and universities which, because of state laws or other factors, cannot now maintain a selective admission policy. In these institutions Freshman Composition must remain for the time being; but they will be ambitious to raise their standards, and in time can, like others which are now more fortunately situated, give up high school teaching. For the good of the profession, and of American education generally, all institutions should join in efforts to improve the teaching of English at the secondary level, and in measures for emphasizing good writing as an aim in all college departments. Leadership in these matters may fairly be expected from the National Council—an organization which has not been in the habit of waiting until the results of a poll give assurance that it is safe to move forward.

ON "COLD LIGHT AND TUMBLING CLOUDS"

TO THE EDITOR:

No one will gainsay the pieties of Professor Flanagan's "Cold Light and Tumbling Clouds" (*College English*, XXI, Nov. 1959, 86-89). We must all strive to be better humanists, avoid the pitfalls of our "methods," and speak and write better too. But surely one of the more obvious obligations of a humanist is to be fair to those who read what he has to say; and, moreover, the editor of a journal which publishes the humanist's words has that obligation too. Thus I think that Professor Flanagan does us a disservice by quoting, admittedly out of context, some sentences from two recent books and by declining to identify them—so that we readers of *College English* aren't given the chance to examine the evidence for themselves. I think, moreover, that the editor should have seen to it that we did get that chance.

Let me point out, then, that the sentences

which Professor Flanagan quotes on p. 88 of his essay come, in order, from James Baird's *Ishmael* (Baltimore, 1956), pp. xvii and 51, and from Milton Stern's *The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville* (Urbana, 1957), pp. 18, 122, and 204. Curiously enough, they all are sentences from summarizing paragraphs and so necessarily somewhat compressed and abstract; their special terminology has been carefully prepared for. Indeed, the first sentence from *Ishmael* comes from a paragraph summarizing the argument of Charles Feidelson's *Symbolism and American Literature*, and so perhaps represents Professor Flanagan's way of killing two "assistant professors" (as he not quite accurately classifies the authors in question in a charitable footnote) with one quotation.

The sentences quoted are not as graceful as they should be, true enough. But this is, or should not be, the whole point. For the

sentences are not—as Professor Flanagan's way of using "evidence" would imply—entirely typical of the writing in the books out of which he has lifted them. Moreover, when the writing is awkward, it is often because Mr. Baird and Mr. Stern are trying very hard to take Melville with all high seriousness, to move beyond explication to a kind of philosophical criticism which Professor Flanagan apparently finds unsettling. Some of us don't find it unsettling, as is demonstrated by the high praise the books have received from reviewers who, unlike Professor Flanagan, have not failed to see the woods for the trees.

But *that* is a matter to be debated. And it is only proper that Professor Flanagan have his say. Indeed, I hope that he will soon have his say again and specify in a little more detail his conception of the relation of a literary critic's style to his understanding of his various roles and to his "theory of literature." We all need to think deeply on the issues involved and to debate them in journals like *College English*. But not, let me insist, as Professor Flanagan does—casting off in a footnote any responsibility for backing up in particular what he says in general. Just because he tells us that the dice are loaded doesn't make his game fair. Readers of *College English* have the right (traditional in scholarly journals) to such bibliographical information as will let them judge the case for themselves. A proper humanist always calls his shots; and if he fails to, it is the duty of an editor who publishes him to see that he does.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Professor Pearce's admonishment to the editor is absolutely just, and the editor

here apologizes not only to him but to Professors Baird and Stern (as he has already privately done) for not thinking to ask the author to make further identification. He apologizes to those readers who, as Professor Pearce puts it, were not "given the chance to examine the evidence for themselves." He also apologizes to Professor Flanagan.

For the record, the author's identification and reasoning, which plainly satisfied the editor at the time, was of "two recent books on Melville"; "... both were written by assistant professors of English and both were published by university presses." "Since I have not been motivated by personal malice in choosing these examples, it seems unnecessary to identify the books." (Text and footnote, p. 88.)

One might note that the practice of quoting or citing disapprovingly without identifying fully is not without precedent, as in the following passages encountered recently: quotation of two critics, by Irving Howe, introd. James's *The Bostonians* (Mod. Lib. ed., 1956), pp. xxiv-xxv; quotation of seven "Old reactions," by Edna Kenton, "Henry James to the Ruminant Reader: *The Turn of the Screw*," repr. *A Casebook on Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw"*, ed. Gerald Willen (1960), pp. 104-105; citation of one critic's thesis, by Marius Bewley, *The Complex Fate: Hawthorne, Henry James and Some Other American Writers* (1952), p. 106; citation of a poet and of an editor of Chaucer, by John Dryden, "Preface to the Fables," quoted in David Daiches, *Critical Approaches to Literature* (1956), pp. 225, 226.

It should be made clear, however, that these passages provide, not justification for, but only an indication of a practice which *College English* should not have followed.

BYMS, GOMS, AND ATTITUDES

MILTON R. STERN

Assistant Professor, University of Connecticut

When I was in the fourth grade, we used to compete for a book prize. At the end of every month, our project-happy principal awarded a book to the class that had the least absences; but because every book devoted itself passionately to photographs

of formal gardens or dyspeptic barnyard animals engaged in various gastronomic necessities, I soon lost interest and gladly gave myself to the underworld of small boys on spring days. But there was one lad in my class who was determined to

uphold the values of civilization. Invariably teacher chose him to deliver the monthly keynote speech about conduct, effort, clean fingernails, and impeccable attendance. I recall the height of his most inventive performance with an indefinable mingling of nostalgia, trembling risibilities, and quaking soul. After painting the horrors of letting *The Book* fall out of the hands of Room 34 (WE had just won It) and into the hands of Room 36 (THEY had had It two months running), he reached both the forensic pitch and the idea that would beat Them into periodic defeat. "Sicknesses is something that always can't be helped," he intoned earnestly beneath his unendurably kempt hair. "But let's try, fellows and girls, to keep up our Good Attendance Record: LEAVE US ALWAYS HAVE OUR SICKNESS IN SCHOOL." I don't know who lurched closer to madness here, the teacher or I. In the accuracy of retrospect I can see that it was my slick champion of aerated toothbrushes. At any rate, fate caught up with him, for despite his grammatical predispositions he has since gone on to become the most classified of all deflowered barnyard animals, the assistant-professor-of-English-at-a-Largemidwesternuniversity.

Because my best friend, a sterling lad of footloose propensities, was in Their room, and because it nourished me wonderfully to thwart the statesmanship of my teacher's pet, early in life I lost allegiance to the Earnest Intonation that makes generalizations about people and the things that people do. I have felt vaguely bilious ever since, whenever I am in the presence of terms that sound as if they begin with capital letters. The attitudes underlying the Solemn Generalization make me itch. A while back I soulfully scratched my way through a *College English* article that recalled the periodic echoes of Grade Four A, an article called "Cold Light and Tumbling Clouds" (November 1959), by John T. Flanagan.

"Clouds" advanced these General Propositions: increasing enrollments place increasing responsibilities for good teaching upon the English teacher. Back in the days of Elmer Edgar Stoll there was good teaching. "Intellectual history," which "is one of the current fads of our graduate schools,"

threatens good teaching today because "too often the intellectual history approach to literature replaces everything else, and teachers who have neither taste nor sensitivity treat a work of art as if it were a document, an artifact without life or charm." Without ever explicitly making the association, "Clouds" then proceeds to connect the "intellectual history" approacher with the Bright Young Man assistant-professor-of-English, together with "the fact that so many of the monographs and studies written by teachers of the humanities are stylistically inept, stuffy, sodden." Along the line, "intellectual history" becomes the label for treatments of literature that "explicate sources, psychoanalysis, or symbolism."

Encouraged by the ept, unstuffed, dehydrated statement, I vaulted the problem of what it meant to be rewarded by Mr. Flanagan's catholic taste: while relegating them to the critical wasteland of occasional utility, "Clouds" granted a sometime recognition to the existence of "the close reading of a text . . . the emphasis on the intention and performance of the author, the borrowing of techniques from other disciplines, the re-evaluation of books in terms of myth or psychoanalysis or Marxism. . . ." The cure for all this intellectual-schmintellectualitis? The "aesthetic approach."

Before approaching the approach of the "aesthetic approach," I would like to play hookey and give the implications involved here an out of school probing in order to strike, strike through the clouds. The article proceeds through a skillful use of implications, and it is necessary to pull them up into the cold light where they may be examined.

Mr. Flanagan has become "tired of books about Melville, which label him as a naturalist, a satanist, a rebel against God, 'the chief redactor of primitivism'" He has been made tired by "the recent exegesis of Melville and Hawthorne and Thoreau. . . ." The horrors committed by Them, the intellectualniks supposedly uncommitted to "the aesthetic approach," were displayed before the eyes of the astonished multitude in the form of "some representative passages from two recent books on Melville which illustrate the murky thought and language" so subversive to the English teacher's Increasing

Responsibilities. The footnote to the passage reads, "Since I have not been motivated by personal malice in choosing these examples, it seems unnecessary to identify the books. Suffice it to say that both were written by assistant professors of English and both were published by university presses." More honest or less adroit than Mr. Flanagan, I must warn the reader here to take his malice where he finds it. One of the books is mine, and the other is James Baird's *Ishmael*, a book with which I have openly disagreed by name and in print, a book that I respect. And having announced this, I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not concerned with a personal defense of my tender little Grade Four A feelings.

Increasingly we subject ourselves to articles in which we tell each other, "Leave us always do this," and "Leave us always do that," instead of reserving our professional notes for the findings that come of the work we do do. Now, Mr. Flanagan is concerned about scholarly communication. Scholarly communication does not proceed from a process of extracting five sentences from two fairly big books and dismissing the ideas motivating those books because some of the prose is bad. More important, true scholarship does not begin in lofty hostility to ideas, even those advanced by Them. Good ideas, like good people, come from all kinds of places. Certainly many of us (not Them or You) as members of a professional group turn out books and articles that are "inept, stuffy, sodden." Perhaps Mr. Baird and I and you and he and she and they have. Perhaps Mr. Flanagan has. Perhaps he has not understood my book, or Mr. Baird's, or the "recent exegesis of Melville and Hawthorne and Thoreau." The point is that the perhaps is beside the point. We have all winced at our own limitations, have all taken pride in work well done, have all wished we could rewrite *that* paragraph, and when all is said and done, we all recognize that a book doesn't come out of our telling each other the Leave-Us-Do's, but out of much doing. Ideas and books and schools of thought are entitled to respect. Good and bad books should be so labeled because books and ideas are important. But a scholar labels by means of reasoned demonstra-

tions and arguments that prove he has respected the material enough to really know what he's read. When he can't, he's quiet. This has nothing to do with adroitness, or our precious gentlemanliness, or even individual decency, but with the basic necessities of scholarship. What I protest is the glib hatchet job, or facile admonition, or courtly "appreciation" that is so often published as "observation," or "review," or "overview."

But the real question, it seems to me, is, what are we looking for in professional scholarship? Mr. Flanagan asks us to remember that we are "dealing with one of the fine arts," and that we should perpetuate its grace "in the books that we write for the student, the general reader, and each other." A noble remonstrance, surely. And it is also well to remember that "the books we write for the student, the general reader, and each other" are not all one. The books that many of us write are quite definitely not intended for the general reader, are for only a certain class of student, are primarily for "each other" as theoreticians, authorities, specialists, professionals. We should as much ask the musicologist to write his theoretical and critical tracts for that mythical "everybody," as we should the mathematician, or biochemist, or political scientist. Mr. Flanagan seems appalled by the idea of professionalism as well as by the possibility that some complex things cannot be said simply. If Mr. Flanagan is tired of professionalism, I am tired of the attitude that makes it a sin. Certainly our best minds *tend* to succeed better than our small minds in saying their say clearly, and in organically clinching in their style their character, their work, their fate. Certainly we should all try to write well, but just saying so is like being in favor of goodness. When we have it, it's a bonus; but even Satan has a hand in our knowledge and our virtues. I am not defending bad writing. I am defending the necessity for the knowledge of many disciplines and the necessity for *hard* writing, because the literary fine art in its various aspects does manage to become involved—just a teensy bit—with ideas.

For "the aesthetic approach," problems like naturalism, primitivism, myth, symbolism, psychology, history, critical theory,

economics, the history of ideas—oh dear, they clutter so! Mr. Flanagan wants instead the experience of the art (or perhaps he means the experience of the artist): "The reader who can follow Henry Thoreau today on a winter walk, who can watch the pickerel at Walden Pond, or who can see through his eyes the successive coloring of the trees in the fall (sumach, birch, maple, oak) enjoys a superb aesthetic experience. Only the professional scholar cares whether he was a transcendentalist or a solipsist."

No one, not even those cluttered Idea People, can fail to sympathize with a basic plea for teaching and writing in order to reaffirm aesthetic and humanitarian values, to reaffirm the experience of the art itself as our major goal. But I cannot agree with Mr. Flanagan's implicit assumption that critical rigor and aesthetic, humanitarian values are two different things or even mutually exclusive. Not quite as tired of "some of the recent exegesis" as Mr. Flanagan, I for one come to Thoreau's trees more nearly with "Thoreau's eyes" precisely *because* of a "recent exegesis" like *The Shores of America*, so magnificently contributed to the scholarly community by Mr. Flanagan's very distinguished colleague, Sherman Paul. I had to strain my own eyes first, following an intricate knot of "intellectual history," and not because of Professor Paul's prose, either.

If we decrease our intellectual activity, we increase our chances of losing the fine art of literature as teachers: we lose the very resources with which we can communicate to our students the promptings of the heart that led us to the literature in the first place. What am I to tell my students when they come to me with questions about Thoreau—"Cleanse yourselves of our inept, stuffy, sodden investigations and go smell the sumachs?" Despite his careful hedging to the contrary, Mr. Flanagan's renunciations lead us to a teaching of literature as a series of charming "experiences" in which hamming it up (a good ability for a teacher to have) replaces content, of subjective impressions (sometimes called "taste") rather than explanations. The last sentence of the sumach ecstasy especially intrigues me: "Only the professional scholar cares whether he

[Thoreau] was a transcendentalist or a solipsist." The realization may come as a shock, but professional scholars is exactly what we are. And what is so *only* about the professional scholar? Why this continual implicit borrowing of a hostile stereotype in which we become damfool snufflers who desiccate every living green bough we touch? The distinctions between the possible definitions of Thoreau's perception are enormously important, for it is just the perception that makes the writer an artist or a duffer, and makes his art either something of value or a curiosity. It is the professional scholar's *job* to worry the problem precisely so that our students may know through which eyes they see when they see through "Thoreau's eyes." In short, Mr. Flanagan implicitly accuses the professional scholar of being too intellectually serious to see the art. I suggest that Mr. Flanagan's "aesthetic approach" is not serious enough to see what seeing the art involves.

The difficulty lies in the terms Mr. Flanagan offers. I don't think he has thought out what he means when he says "intellectual history" and "aesthetic and humanitarian values." Finally, is not each set of terms mutually inclusive? (I have had to abandon at the outset any hope that by "intellectual history," Mr. Flanagan means "the history of ideas," for he has implicitly subsumed under "intellectual history" almost every method for approaching literature except the method of impressionistic appreciation.) Are not the meanings and symbols and mythic proportions of art the very essence of its viability and significance in human affairs? Are not the structure and accuracy and form and evocative powers of art the very essence of its beauty and impact? What does Mr. Flanagan teach when he teaches "aesthetic and humanitarian values?"

The business of teaching—the workaday business of teaching—obviates, finally, the entire argument. In the classroom everybody and nobody reduces the work of art to an artifact. At one point or another, every teacher reduces the art to an artifact for various temporary purposes—to indicate meaning, structure, function of parts (one could go on and on)—just as in his own classes Mr. Flanagan reduces works to artifacts for the purposes of literary history.

And no teacher worth his promotion leaves the work at that. In my department there are representatives of various systems, people with a real sense of commitment, who are experienced in the skills of new criticism, neo-Aristotelianism, archetypalism, linguistics, or literary history. They all teach literature differently, and yet none of these "intellectualists" teaches a book as if it were one thing only, none of them makes the book less important than his own system, none of them leaves the book reduced to an artifact, although in class he has reduced it temporarily to many different artifacts. In the knockaround of the classroom, the Pronouncements of Leave-Us-Do become largely—shall I say it?—academic.

Yet there are attitudes underlying the entire debate that are anything but academic. These attitudes nasty the standard warfare between the generations into a skirmish of bushwhackers in the groves of you-know-what. Most noticeable in "Clouds" is the attitude of the Grand Old Man (GOM). The general stance is one in which the GOM sights down along his nose with cool amusement, sorrow, and disdain (knowing what Art is and knowing what he Likes) at the hot, scurrying activity of the myriad Bright Young Men (BYMs) he has just uncovered beneath the flat rock of professional research. With Stern Justice, Amused Despair, or Tolerant Admonition, the GOM defends the crumbling outposts of Reason (what he likes), Scholarship (the ability to avoid gaucherie in print and conversation), Art (sumach smelling) against the BYM's gabbling Rant and Jargon (ideas the GOM either dislikes or doesn't understand). The GOM is the lone voice of tolerant appeal from the past, and the BYM travels in hordes.

The attitude is revealed in passages such as this one: "The bright young men who pour from our graduate schools today are well disciplined, eager, and alert. But too often the intellectual history approach to literature replaces everything else, and teachers who have neither taste nor sensitivity treat a work of art as if it were a document, an artifact without life or charm." The picture is not a happy one. The dam has busted. Here come the regimented BYMs of today, pouring, pouring,

inundating our serene valleys of Art, Cassius-skinny, knifelike, crook-clawed, forward leaning with their hair blowing in the wind, jut-jawed, lean, and aggressive, their beady gimlet eyes alertly ferreting out ibids and ideologies, their ferocious and incessant breath laying waste the land. Within them boils the rot of intellectual history that destroys what they digest, turning to dead ashes the objects of their puppy-panting eagerness. Rather a far cry, I think, from the rusty twang with which the graduate school portals pop open to deposit another occasional mesomorph outside to face his first full-time brace of freshman composition classes. The GOM image of the BYM is reminiscent of our news dispatches from the Korean War, in which Chinese always came in hordes. A good friend of mine, attached to the artillery toward the end of that war, told me that because of the rationed rounds in a limited war, the artillery was forbidden to fire at groups of less than seven of the enemy. The Chinese soon took to walking the valley bottoms in groups of seven, waving in their immunity at the GPs in the overlooking gun positions. "You could never be sure of the strength of an opposing battalion or regiment or division," he told me, "but there were always seven Chinese to a horde." Our present moment is mind-crowded, gutter-hungry, and proletarian. The GOM's past is clean, scrubbed by the giants of culture. Back in that calm day when the few BYMs were urbane gentlemen scholars who revered their masters and wrote simply, lucidly, and well, there was breathing space for the cool wind of Love for Literature to refresh the teacher who, today, is tired and flushed by the flaming chatter of "recent exegesis."

Well, certainly we publish much nonsense. Doubtless much of our recent exegesis never should have seen print. Everybody is tired. But I am just as tired of articles like Professor Stoll's on Melville (*Moby-Dick* is not of perennial importance, merely being a story about a whale who resents an ill-natured sea captain's profiteering designs upon his blubber) as I am of the nonsense turned out today. There is sense and nonsense, written clearly or otherwise, in Mr. Stoll's day, in Mr. Flanagan's day, and today. The battle between the "approaches" of today and yesterday is not the real one:

the idiocy is forgotten and the contributions merge in a cumulative whole. The real battle is the constant one between first and second rate minds. In short, while BYM and GOM make good labels and bad attitudes, in the flesh they are as nonexistent as the normal man. The generalization beneath the attitude is untrue. Many GOMs I have met are neither grand nor old, as many BYMs are neither bright nor young. The only general distinction that holds is the one between those who use and those who misuse scholarly tools—people of all birthday ages and graduation classes.

Just as the actualities of the classroom dispel the issues Mr. Flanagan rides, the actualities of time destroy the validity of the GOM-BYM attitudes that raise them. These attitudes are prompted by stimuli that affect us all, stimuli revealed in the opening paragraphs of Mr. Flanagan's article. There he is acutely aware of the headline position that education has come to take, and, like many of us, he has become uncomfortable. The social causes of defensiveness in professors of the humanities in our culture is an old story that even the BYMs know. I suspect that it is just when we begin to lose faith in the importance of our jobs and in ourselves that we begin telling each other how important we really are, and scribble our billet-doux, our poison pens, and Leave-Us-Do's to each other. Thus the uneasy desire to be presentable, popular, buddy to everybody. Thus the urge to offend no one by "professionalism." We don't want to be made to look foolish at any cost, and the rant of our BYMs may prove embarrassing. It's a sickness that enervates all of us, and our "intellectualism" becomes suspect.

Therefore I think that it is not really a suspicion of intellectualism gone sour in foolish scholarship that twitches us into writing our Leave-Us-Do's. It is an uneasiness about the picture we make to the Great Public which, for the first time, is beginning to peer in at us. My objection is that the desire to make us over into Cultured Gentlemen worshipping the Muse with lucid grace is capitulation to some of the very forces in our culture that make us feel like displaced persons in the first

place, and should be named for what it is: a timid and self-conscious and sometimes aristocratic anti-intellectualism. Which brings me to my own Exhortation. As much as I distrust the labels, the generalizations, and the Leave-Us-Do's, I must advance one of my own. Come on, fellows and girls, BYMs and GOMs alike—leave us do our own professional work and leave us have our sickness *out* of school.

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for letting me see the criticisms of my November article in *College English* written by Professors Pearce and Stern. I do not quite see the need for apology. I wrote my article sincerely and in good faith as a criticism mostly of slovenly writing. I happened to choose for illustrations of what I criticized some selections from books on Melville because they happened to be at hand; it would have been just as easy to find other examples of what I deplore in books on Thoreau or Faulkner. The appalling rhetoric which I quoted is not confined to Melvilleans. Moreover, I deliberately tried to keep my article from being personal and to refrain from personal abuse. For this reason I did not identify the authors or the books I used. Certainly it is possible to criticize the muddy and obscure writing of a passage without impugning the personal character of its author.

Professor Pearce insists that I had an obligation to identify book and author. He has a point, but I don't concede it. The anonymity of the evidence makes it more possible to be objective about it. I regret even now that identification has been made.

Professor Stern's letter seems to a large extent diffuse, irrelevant, and verbose. Moreover, it is as long as if not longer than the original article. Does *College English* have sufficient space to permit the publication of such a puerile diatribe?

Differences of opinion in literary or artistic matters are not only desirable but inevitable. I happen to believe that critical writing should be clear and succinct and logical. A good many people seem to share this opinion.

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Books

GRAMMAR *with* TEARS: SEVENTY-ONE COMPOSITION TEXTS

JOHN C. SHERWOOD

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Farewell the tongue of poets, priests, and dons—
Gone is the schoolmarm, gone the stern precisian!
Hail, children, hail your true *Amerikaans*:
High Perrinish, or New Low Anglo-Friesian.

The task assigned to me in this review was appallingly simple: to survey all of the composition texts published since the appearance of Professor Williams's review last year (March 1959). To review all of these texts fully and to do justice to every aspect of every one of them was obviously impossible. What did seem possible was to classify each book accurately, to note those features, good and bad, which might be most likely to affect adoptions, and occasionally to discuss general problems and issues involved in the classification and evaluation of composition books. Passages that seem digressive usually serve to indicate trends, to establish standards, or to sum up some trait common to a whole group of books. I should be content if the review would serve the purpose of guiding the teacher to the books which would be most interesting to him and most likely to serve his purposes, and I should be very happy if the review called to his attention interesting books which he might otherwise not have noticed among the ranks that fill his shelves. It is conceivable, of course, that there are some published texts which would be of no interest to anybody. I should not like to say that any of the '59 or late '58 models discussed here are worthless; all of them could be described as "usable" or "adequate." A few—not necessarily the worst by any means—are so specialized as to be suitable only for special situations; a few others are eccentric and would suit only teachers who are similarly eccentric; and quite a number are adequate but colorless—conventional books indistinguishable

from one another. Publisher's agents have no compunctions about calling such works "unique" and "dynamic," but the unhappy reviewer is hard put to find anything to say. I have tried to make special mention of a few genuinely original books which have appeared in conventional disguises.

Although it might be argued that a reviewer entrusted with a whole year's crop of textbooks ought to judge every book in terms of the author's standards and entirely suppress his own standards and prejudices, I have not wished to let the review degenerate into a bibliography. But if I have criticized freely, I have tried to describe honestly, so that a reader with different principles can still find his way to the books he would prefer, even if they are among those that I liked least.

As for "trends," several will be noted in connection with specific groups. Trends seem to be unstable things, for two that Professor Williams observed last year have reversed themselves. "Communication" is very much alive, and paper covers are popular.

The review is intended to include all composition texts published in 1959 and all those published in 1958 which were not reviewed by Professor Williams, but considering the mass of available material, it would be surprising if there were no stragglers left over to be reviewed in 1960.

"COMPLETE COURSES"

By this term we will understand any text which offers a reader and a handbook or

rhetoric between the same covers—thus providing, in theory at least, all the needed material for a standard composition course. Such a text has obvious advantages in the way of economy and convenience; it makes possible a thoroughly integrated course, but it severely limits the instructor's rights of self-determination. The season brings us four books which fall roughly in this category, but of these two are revised editions and another is an expansion of a rhetoric previously published.

The "expansion" is *Understanding and Using English: Third Edition with Readings*, Newman P. Birk and Genevieve B. Birk (Odyssey, 1959). As a rhetoric and handbook, it was reviewed last year. The edition newly made available adds some three hundred pages of readings; in part the sections correspond to sections in the rhetoric and illustrate types of writing, but in part they have a different aim—to help the student choose "meaningful values on which to build his personal philosophy." The selections include worn-out favorites such as "Four Types of Thinking" as well as fresher and more interesting material. Questions are provided, rather general, as questions in this kind of book usually are, but more helpful than in most of them. This is a reader which most teachers would find adequate.

The two revisions perpetuate books that saw the light back in depression days: *A Complete Course in Freshman English*, Harry Shaw et al., Fifth Edition (Harper, 1959); and *American Composition and Rhetoric*, Donald Davidson, Fourth Edition (Scribner's, 1959). Both seem a bit dated, but for rather different reasons. Shaw is dated because he embalms most of the trends that have swept over composition since 1940: semantics, communication (including "listening"), and the concern with "ideas" and "values" which leads, in the editorial apparatus accompanying the readings, to such questions as "What new football rules promote or lessen the entertainment value of the game?" and "Are school and college vacations too long?"—questions of doubtful relevance to the teaching of writing or even listening. On the other hand, in spite of the fact that Professor Paul Roberts is quoted at length on the subject of usage, the analysis of the

grammar of English makes few concessions to linguistics. The readings provide not only models for composition but also an introduction to the main types of literature. If Shaw does not present any vital or even coherent point of view, he does offer something for everybody.

Davidson's book is dated in a much more pleasant sense, as representing a coherently and defensibly conservative point of view. The work might best be characterized as gentlemanly—gentlemanly in tone, gentlemanly in the selections, gentlemanly in standards, gentlemanly even in format (putting aside a gaudy correction chart). Davidson's announced principles are altogether admirable: that rhetoric is no mere tool but a rich cultural content, that grammar and rhetoric are intimately interrelated, that models for writing should have enduring merit and not be merely provocative, that the positive approach should dominate. Even more than Shaw, Davidson writes on grammar in happy innocence, as if structural linguistics had never been, nay, as if Perrin had never written: he sternly labels constructions RIGHT and WRONG and states, apparently without fear of contradiction, that "Grammar is the servant of logic"—a statement which happens to be reasonable in the context of Davidson's book but which might cause comment in the present climate of opinion. Though dated in the one sense, Davidson's book has a kind of freshness still, for its humanistic values do not become stale as the values of socialized composition do.

Effective English, Philip Gerber (Random House, 1959) is strongly slanted toward the communication course, both in content and in attitudes and point of view toward language; thus it includes work on such matters as speech, visual aids, panel discussions, oral reading, propaganda devices, and even literary appreciation. Inevitably the treatment of many topics is brief and casual. Surprisingly, the treatment of grammar is rather conservative. The reader offers some fresh and interesting selections, but arranged according to subject, and provided with a minimum of editorial apparatus. This is a specialized book, of interest only to those who are offering a particular type of course. (A somewhat similar book, *Communication*

Skills: The Basic Course, is reviewed among the workbooks.)

READERS

Readers are especially difficult to review. Any experienced teacher of good taste and moderate industry is capable of producing an acceptable reader, and many of them do. It is impossible to set up categories of good and bad readers, for almost any reader is usable for some purpose if the instructor is ingenious enough. Here more than elsewhere the reviewer's function becomes that of a matchmaker, bringing congenial readers and users together in happy union.

A Hegelian pattern of two basic types originally sharply distinct but tending to blend into a synthesis is visible here as in the rhetoric. There is an "inner-directed" type (directed inward toward composition); the selections will be chosen for literary quality, will be arranged according to some rhetorical principle, and will be furnished with questions emphasizing rhetorical points. Its traditional foe is an "other-directed" type (directed outward toward the world); the selections will be chosen for content, especially social significance, will be arranged by content under such headings as "Race" and "Conformity," and will be furnished with questions which encourage classroom debate on such matters as free will and extrasensory perception. Texts of the second type offer problems for the reviewer, since they cannot be judged in the normal way, in terms of their contribution to the official purposes of the course: except insofar as they provide theme topics or encourage analytical reading, they are simply irrelevant. Is it really supposed that faculties and administrations require composition in order that classes may assemble three days a week to consider whether Moon Mullins is relevant to the atomic age, or whether boxing is an anachronism (Fiedler, pages 627, 632)? Yet the two types tend to blend; sometimes a text offers a double table of contents, sometimes an arrangement that makes sense in terms of both content and rhetoric, but most often a division into two parts, one organized by rhetoric and one by content.

Among the other-directed texts, *Explorations in College Reading*, James I. Brown

(Heath, 1959) shows an arrangement based on the growth of the student's interests; the earlier selections constitute a kind of orientation unit on adjustment to college life, and at the end the student is encouraged to consider man "in a scientific setting, in an artistic setting, and in a social setting." The selections are unstereotyped but include a disproportionate number of casual productions from popular magazines. The usefulness of the book is enormously increased by the provision of a supplementary *Exercise Manual*—actually a substantial workbook with tear-out tests aimed at developing reading comprehension through detailed and searching questions. The questions in the text itself are rather general.

Student and Society: Readings for College English, George P. Clark and A. Dwight Culler (Evanston: Row, Peterson, 1959) is a rather superior example of the same sort. Some of the selections are stale, but others are fresh, and nearly all of them are of decent literary quality. As is usual with such books, the questions are general and seldom touch on rhetorical matters. The most interesting sections are two units of the Sams-McNeir type involving problems of evidence: ("Who Wrote the Plays of Shakespeare?" and "Are There Really Flying Saucers?") and intended to lead into controlled-research papers.

The Art of the Essay, Leslie Fiedler (Crowell, 1958) is a hard book to classify, since it betrays a conflict of purposes. The title suggests an intent to examine the essay as a literary type; the preface mentions a desire to treat "the whole field from Montaigne to the present"; and most of the essays are of literary quality. But except for Montaigne himself, Rousseau, and de Crèvecoeur, all the authors belong to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the arrangement has nothing to do with art, but is built around the topics "Discovery of the Self," "America," and "Ourselves and Our Culture"; and the questions, though often dealing with rhetorical points, do not amount to the orderly exposition of an art. Viewed simply as an anthology, as a collection of interesting essays rather than as a textbook for composition, the book seems much more attractive.

Ideas in Context, Joseph Satin (Houghton Mifflin, 1958) is organized like an

other-directed text and has the same grandiose theme topics ("Democracy and Equality," "The Limitations of the Arts") but is really a very original book which pays adequate attention to composition. The selections are quite unusual; they represent such varied authors as Pliny the Elder and Leslie Charteris, Nietzsche and Bret Harte, and if they are not always the best of models, they are at least genuinely stimulating. The questions deal with composition and are numerous and definite. It would be unfortunate if the modest format and conventional appearance of this book should keep it from getting the attention it deserves.

The texts which emphasize the art of composition are somewhat more numerous. Almost all of them are quality books, with good selections carefully and even ingeniously edited, but unhappily they are not always easy to tell apart. The principle of arrangement in the selections provides as convenient a scheme of classification as any.

Some of the texts show an arrangement according to the type of writing. *Writing Prose: Techniques and Purposes*, Thomas S. Kane and Leonard J. Peters (Oxford, 1959) begins with a series of short selections illustrating the old rhetorical categories of exposition, description and so on, and concludes with a group of full-scale essays. The selections are of high quality, the questions unusually full and detailed (concluding always with a handy summary telling the student what he should have learned from them), and the theme topics better than average. There is a glossary of rhetorical terms at the end. *Approaches to Prose*, Caroline Siuodes and Justine Van Gundy (Macmillan, 1959) offers equally good selections, varied if eccentric theme topics, and questions which tend to be concerned more with reading comprehension than with the analysis of the selections as models. "Prose" in this instance does not mean simply exposition; expository speech and the short story are well represented, and there is even a dialogue. Both books deserve something better than paper covers.

Two of the readers classify selections according to the problem or aspect of writing being illustrated (e.g., "Theme Idea," "Comparison and Contrast"). *Reading for Writing*, Arthur Mizener (Holt, 1958) is

the more literary of the two; *A Reading Approach to College Writing*, Martha H. Cox and Dorothy N. Foote (San Francisco: Howard Chandler, 1959) shows a preference for the popular magazines and admits no author more classical than James Thurber. The authors of both texts are extremely generous with editorial aids. Mizener's book contains not only a multitude of questions on rhetoric but also an extended commentary on one essay in each section. *A Reading Approach* is not quite so generous with questions, but it offers great masses of theme topics, together with specimen "entrance" and "final" examinations. These are among the shorter books reviewed.

Is it evil, incidentally, to use selections from *This Week* and *Cosmopolitan* in preference to Macaulay and E. B. White? Popular authors are doubtless more acceptable to unselected students, since they deal with contemporary, everyday problems, avoid intellectual and moral complexities, and employ the crude rhetorical devices that anyone can imitate. Their influence on the student's style and paragraphing is likely to be unfortunate, but even more objectionable are their stereotyped thinking, their crude standards of value, and their fondness for cure-alls and simple solutions.

The organization by types and the organization by problems are obviously not incompatible; one might logically begin a text with a series of units on problems common to all kinds of writing and conclude with a consideration of special types. Thus *Writers in Action: 28 Essays*, Edward R. Hagemann, Alan H. Casty, and C. R. Greenwood (Prentice-Hall, 1959) has two main divisions labelled "How Does the Writer Work?" and "What Are the Writer's Purposes?" (the purposes are exposition, persuasion, and criticism). The questions are good and emphasize writing; the selections are rather "popular," with a cultural range from Mencken to the editors of *Mad*, and tend to deal with contemporary issues. This is a short book (161 pages), paper-bound.

A Rhetoric Case Book, Francis Connolly, Second Edition (Harcourt, Brace, 1959) and *Assignments in Exposition*, Louise E. Rorabacher (Harper, 1959) show this same

overall plan, but that is not all they have in common. Both are in a sense condensed rhetorics, with illustrative readings interspersed through the theoretical discussions—or to look at it the other way, they are readers tied together with a thread of theory. Many of the selections are naturally short, like the illustrations in an ordinary rhetoric, but others are on the usual scale. Each book is highly organized; a teacher who approved of the author's method would find that his course would almost teach itself, but one who was even slightly out of sympathy with the approach would find himself in a straight jacket. Either book would be a godsend to a beginning teacher. While the differences between them may not be important, one might note that Rorabacher is more highly organized (if that is possible) and that Connolly has better (or at least more classical) selections.

Modern Prose: Form and Style, William Van O'Connor (Crowell, 1959) shows an arrangement that mingles types and problems; it is divided into ten units, some of them organized around types, some around problems, and some around subjects. One unit is a brief anthology illustrating the history of English prose. Most interesting is the section on censorship, which provides material for a controlled research paper and a springboard into library work. The selections are fresh and "literary," the questions brief and general (but additional questions are given in the Teacher's Manual).

One possible device for giving form to a composition text is the idea of observation or perception, or more philosophically, the way in which the mind, observing an object or situation, interprets it in the light of its own interests and preconceptions. This process of observation corresponds closely enough to the writing process—choice of subject, assumption of a point of view, selection of detail, etc.—to be usable in teaching writing; one would expect an emphasis on narrative and description among the types of writing and on "point of view" among rhetorical problems. This approach can be combined with an organization by content, the observing eye being turned on a succession of objects in turn. *Writing from Observation*, revised by Lester W. Cameron and Samuel A. Gold-

en, Third Edition (Harcourt, Brace, 1959) is a well established book of this type. A succession of interesting selections (including some poems) leads the student to observe such phenomena as the town and the family. *Seeing and Writing: Fifteen Exercises in Composing Experience*, Walker Gibson (Longmans, Green, 1959) is a shorter book but very carefully planned; many of the selections are paired so that the phenomenon (family quarrels, for instance) is viewed first in everyday terms and then in terms of some discipline such as anthropology or history. It is another modest book in danger of undeserved neglect. Somewhat similar and equally ingenious is *A Range of Writing*, Henry W. Knepler and Samuel K. Workman (Prentice-Hall, 1959). Of the four divisions, one is a mere miscellany; each of the other three presents a general topic ("The Company of Men and Women," "Man and the City," "Work of Art") through selections ranging from the straight factual report to "creative writing." Thus the emphasis is placed on the different types of writing—not the old rhetorical types, but rather different degrees of formality and objectivity. Having been chosen for content, the selections range from lively fiction to plodding sociology. The editorial apparatus is very elaborate.

Although a book that follows a rigid teaching plan has certain advantages, yet for a course taught by a large and probably anarchistic staff whose views must somehow be reconciled and compromised, a limper book may be preferable. The next five readers all effect a compromise between the inner-and other-directed types; each has a division organized by rhetoric followed by a division organized by content. In *College Reading and Writing*, Bernard Grebanier and Seymour Reiter (Holt, 1959) the break between the sections is very marked. The first section is a rhetoric with interspersed readings on the Connolly-Rorabacher pattern, but the second is simply a collection of miscellaneous essays grouped under such broad headings as "Man in Society" and quite unprovided with editorial apparatus. The selections come from all kinds of sources but tend toward the literary.

Working with Prose, Otto Reinert (Harcourt, Brace, 1959) has the same basic structure; the first section, however, is not a rhetoric but an ordinary collection of readings classified by type and furnished with some editorial comment. The readings are all contemporary and sometimes a bit too popular. The strength of the book lies in the extensive exercises, which aim at both reading comprehension and understanding of the art of writing.

Longer than these is *The Province of Prose*, William R. Keast and Robert E. Streeter, Second Edition (Harper, 1959). *The Province* is what a consumers' organization would call a "best buy"—not necessarily the best in all respects (there are some unrealistic theme assignments), but always acceptable, and flexible enough to suit almost any purpose. Though the book compromises among many interests, it is not flabby or characterless. The selections are usually fresh and almost always of high quality; at least we are not offered "Modern Man Is Obsolete." The second edition does not differ materially from the first but would appear to be less difficult.

Somewhat comparable to *The Province of Prose* are the *Harbrace College Reader*, Mark Schorer, Philip Durham, and Everett L. Jones (Harcourt, Brace, 1959) and *Factual Prose: Introduction to Explanatory and Persuasive Writing*, Walter Blair and John Gerber, Fourth Edition (Scott, Foresman, 1959). Both offer a preliminary section emphasizing rhetorical patterns and techniques and a somewhat longer section on "problems and issues." Both have sections dealing with "evaluation"; the section in *Factual Prose* is clearly intended to teach the student to read critically, but the section in the *Harbrace* is simply a group of essays without any editorial matter whatsoever. Aside from this, both books are rather heavily edited; the *Harbrace* runs to questions and *Factual Prose* to commentary. The essays in both are fairly fresh and of good quality; *Harbrace* favors modern essays, while *Factual Prose* includes some older material.

Completely flexible because lightly edited is an attractive paper-bound anthology, *British and American Essays, 1905-1956*, Carl L. Anderson and George W. Williams (Holt, 1959). The essays are all "lit-

erary" (Conrad, Forster, Woolf, etc.) and tend toward the familiar. This would be a good supplement to the more solemn and sociological collections.

Three recent readers deviate from the normal pattern in that the readings talk about language instead of simply being illustrations of the use of language. The most ambitious of these is *Reader and Writer*, Harrison Hayford and Howard P. Vincent (Houghton Mifflin, 1959), which gives selections dealing with communication in the broadest sense: reading, writing, logic, semantics, mass communications, even "experience." Poems and stories as well as essays are included, taken from all periods and usually of high quality. The editorial apparatus is moderately full. Because of the number and variety of the selections, this book would serve any of the ordinary purposes of a reader. *Ideas in Process: An Anthology of Readings in Communication*, C. Merton Babcock (Harper, 1958) is similar in plan but briefer. In keeping with its "communication" point of view, it favors modern selections and a linguist's attitude toward usage; Babcock prints two essays by Professor Donald Lloyd while Hayford and Vincent balance an essay by Marckwardt against an emphatically conservative statement from the *New Yorker* reviewer Dwight MacDonald. *Essays on Language and Usage*, Leonard F. Dean and Kenneth G. Wilson (Oxford, 1959) is a more specialized book, bringing together selections on language and usage rather than the whole field of communication. Its purpose is to liberate the student from his "anxiety about being correct" by putting "the usual handbooks in perspective." This purpose seems to relieve the editors of any obligation to present linguistic controversies impartially; the linguists are exhibited triumphing over their foes, and the foes (except for Samuel Johnson, who hardly counts) are silenced. Yet such a convenient collection has great value, not so much for liberating freshman as for enlightening instructors and providing materials for advanced courses in language and the teaching of English.

One can only conclude that a teacher would indeed be hard to please if he could not suit himself from among this wealth of readers.

CONTROLLED RESEARCH BOOKS

The multiplication of controlled research books is not as depressing as the multiplication of other types, since the continued use of one text produces a suspicious sameness in student papers. It is becoming clear, too, that the type shows at least two subtypes, and the devotees of one might not necessarily care for the other. Most of the books in the Heath series follow the long-standing tradition of the University of Oregon; they deal with broad topics of literary or historical interest, they favor documents of literary quality, and they lead the student to write themes in what might be termed "cultural history." Books in the other series tend to deal with restricted topics, often involving a complicated problem of evidence, and sometimes of political significance. Some recent books which take literature as a subject might be thought of as a third type. Perhaps tendency would be a better word than type, for compromises are possible and individual books are not always easy to classify.

Westward to Oregon, Silvia Anderson and Jacob Korg (Heath, 1958); *California Gold*, Edwin R. Bingham, and *Mr. Spectator's London*, John H. Sutherland (Heath, 1959) are typical of the Heath series; the general topic is broad, and the selections are lively and interesting in their own right, besides providing a wealth of romantic detail on such matters as Indians and coffee houses for the student to generalize from. *California Gold* is entertaining enough to be a bedside reader. Since the intent is to force the student to hunt out and arrange his materials for himself—to do, in other words, a certain amount of research—the selections are not arranged by subject, and the index is furnished only to the instructor. In *Autobiography of Brook Farm*, Henry W. Sams (Prentice-Hall, 1958) the materials are arranged to form a connected history of the farm, and a full index is included in the text. The tone is scholarly, unpublished materials being included, and the book is altogether attractive and interesting.

Good examples of the second type are *Commonwealth vs. Sacco and Vanzetti*, Robert P. Weeks (Prentice-Hall, 1958) and *The Chicago Haymarket Riot: Anarchy on*

Trial, Bernard R. Kogan (Heath, 1959). Both raise factual questions of evidence and abstract questions of freedom and justice; both are so edited as to encourage the student to see the questions in a larger context. Considering the limitations of the subjects, both provide a considerable variety of theme topics. *The Third Day at Gettysburg: Pickett's Charge*, Alan M. Hollingsworth and James M. Cox (Holt, 1959) is a massive piece of scholarship planned and edited with great care, but, as the title indicates, extremely specialized. Civil War enthusiasts would love it, but it might be hard to sell to mixed classes.

Of the books that take literature as a subject, *Designs of Famous Utopias*, Donald J. Gray and Allan H. Orrick (Rinehart, 1959) seems the most usable. The utopias, ranging from Plato and More down to Wells and Skinner, are radically and ruthlessly condensed but retain at least some of their original flavor. The possibilities of the topic are obvious. *What Was Naturalism? Materials for an Answer*, Edward Stone (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959) might be too specialized for ordinary freshman use but would provide fine background reading for some literature courses, since it gives excerpts from philosophers and scientists as well as poets and novelists. *A Casebook on Ezra Pound*, William Van O'Connor and Edward Stone (Crowell, 1959) is of even more specialized interest, though since the issues are partly factual, it might be somewhat easier for ordinary students to write from. Needless to say the instructor would find these documents on the later phases of Pound's career fascinating.

Just as many controlled research books are interesting simply as books for recreational reading, so some books not specially prepared for this purpose are usable in class. We might simply note in passing *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis*, Edmund S. Morgan (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959).

Two recent pamphlets give instructions for the writing of term papers: *Theme-craft*, Margaret Waterman (Cleveland: Howard Allen, 1959) and *How to Write Your Term Paper*, Elinor Yaggy (San Francisco: Howard Chandler, 1958). Both

books tend to emphasize the technical aspects and to slight the principles of scholarship that ought to govern even student research, though Waterman does discuss primary and secondary sources and Yaggy has some graphic demonstrations of the relationship between the notes and the finished product. Both reproduce examples. Yaggy is the fuller and more detailed, if this is an advantage.

HANDBOOKS, RHETORICS, AND GRAMMARS

The handbook and the rhetoric have virtually ceased to be distinct types, with good reason: there will obviously not be much demand for a book which is suitable *only* for systematic classroom discussion (as a pure rhetoric would be) or *only* for reference (as a pure handbook would be). The most economical compromise would appear to be a book organized as a rhetoric but broken up into numbered and keyed sections for reference (Gorrell and Laird is an instance); but equally common is the book which presents a rhetoric and handbook bound together. Since many topics inevitably have to be treated twice in such an arrangement, space is often wasted. One would expect this year's handbooks to be exciting documents in the linguistic controversy, but in actual fact many tend to cautious compromise.

Let us begin with three books which may be termed relatively conventional, as things go these days; two of them are, indeed, old favorites newly revised. *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, Porter G. Perrin, Third Edition revised with the assistance of Karl W. Dykema (Scott, Foresman, 1959) is so well known as to require little comment. It shows its old virtues of clarity, reasonableness, and readability, and its old weakness of being just a little too relaxed, of offering the despairing student who comes to it for an answer only an opportunity to exercise the taste which he does not have. It shows mature wisdom, particularly in the treatment of the structural controversy (see under "Linguistics" and "Parts of Speech" in the Index); the index is a perfect treasury of reflections on all sorts of topics, many, incidentally, of great interest and value to the instructor as well as the student. Perrin

writes as one who has mastered his subject, and not as the gentlemen amateurs whose first interest is literature and who make composition texts as a sideline. Such amateurs are not to be despised, for they have kept composition from turning into a social science or a branch of journalism or linguistics, but their utterances cannot be as impressive as those of a man who is both a gentleman and an authority on language.

Effective Writing, Robert H. Moore, Second Edition (Rinehart, 1959) is an established book, though by no means so venerable as Perrin's. Moore's rhetoric has a much more logical and natural organization than most. He is always clear and direct, even in handling such a ticklish subject as deductive logic; he is simple and practical, perhaps unidealistically practical, preferring (for instance) student to professional examples. One naturally looks these days to see what a handbook is doing with the parts of speech; Moore, deviating from both the tradition and the linguistic school, advises the student that "function is a surer guide than form"—not very helpful advice if the student has no command of either function or form or any clear idea as to why there should be a conflict. The constricted limits of the handbook annex of a rhetoric really do not permit the exposition of anything but the simplest and most unambiguous system. In the long run Moore usually returns to the traditional grammar. This would be an easy and pleasant book to teach from.

Words and Ideas: A Handbook for College Writing, Hans Guth (San Francisco: Wadsworth, 1959) is in many respects comparable to Moore, more ambitious at times, less satisfactory in some respects. Even more than Moore, Guth confuses things by introducing innovations in grammatical analysis which he has not the space to explain adequately. Basically his intent seems to be to keep the terminology and much of the material of the old grammar and to add linguistic concepts as needed. This is a laudable aim but is not always successfully executed. For example, Guth seems to be deserting the old distinction between transitive and intransitive, active and passive verbs for a curious classification into *action*, *linking*, *passive*, and *imperative*; yet so obscure is the passage (pp.

357-358) that we cannot be sure whether it is verbs or sentences that are being classified, nor is the description consistent with that given on page 306. A linguistic definition of the adjective in terms of comparison is offered during a discussion of the linking verb but forgotten in the passages chiefly devoted to adjectives. This muddle over grammar is all the more unfortunate since many parts of the book, such as the sections on logic and persuasion and the introduction to the grammar, are excellent.

The two remaining composition handbooks are even less conventional. *Guide to American English*, L. M. Myers, Second Edition (Prentice-Hall, 1959) is a vigorous, independent, lively, aggressive, and eccentric book, certainly progressive, but not easily classified in terms of existing factions. The grammar is linguistic, in a slapdash way of its own ("Anybody can call anything he wants to the parts of speech." "If you ask what is a final intonation pattern, you won't find the answer here. . . . If you don't [know already], this is the wrong book for you to be reading.") There is a heavy influence of semantics, showing itself in some fretting about the fact that "the general structure of our language was worked out thousands of years before our present ideas of the human nervous system and the structure of matter were developed" (so that, for instance, we ignorantly call iron *solid*). The book is for you if—and only if—you share Myers's particular set of prejudices and interests.

Patterns of Thinking and Writing: A Modern Approach to American English, Byron Guyer and Donald A. Bird (San Francisco: Wadsworth, 1959) is another book *sui generis*: it is exceedingly difficult to characterize. Its main purpose is to bring together principles from "semantics, simple logic, and structural grammar" which are pertinent to writing. This statement would suggest that it is to be used as a supplement to a handbook, but the provision of a section on the term paper, not to mention a correction chart, suggests that this is a handbook or handbook substitute. If so, there would seem to be an implication that the study of linguistics and logic, without rhetoric, provides the student with all the theory that he needs for writing. The phrase "without rhetoric" is perhaps too

strong, since some odds and ends of rhetoric are scattered throughout (organization slips in in connection with the research paper), but rhetoric is definitely incidental. The treatment of induction is interesting; deduction, however, is scarcely touched. The linguistically oriented grammar has some things to recommend it. It is positive and business-like; the authors use their time expounding their own system instead of wasting space trying to show up someone else's ignorance; it is systematic and consistent, not a hodge-podge of incompatible bits from different systems. Like all linguistic grammars except those too brief to be of any use, it seems wordy, roundabout, and technical; doubtless this is inevitable where nothing can be taken for granted and everything must be explained. If this book is to fit the normal course, it ought to be condensed into a supplementary pamphlet or expanded into a genuine handbook.

Two of the handbooks offer a "communication" approach: *The Perceptive Writer, Reader, and Speaker*, Ken Macrorie (Harcourt, Brace, 1959) and *Communication: Principles and Practice*, Charles H. Kegel and Martin Stevens (San Francisco: Wadsworth, 1959). Both show the standardized pattern already observed in Gerber: that is, a unification of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and a special concern with the social problems associated with language (there is the usual interest in mass media and group discussion). Both texts have sharply defined, methodical, and almost artificially logical arrangements and would to this extent be easy to teach from. Macrorie ingeniously unifies around the idea of perception, which means in effect the process by which raw material takes on form in writing. Both books are liberal in grammatical matters, accepting structural linguistics (or as Macrorie would put it, "revolutionary grammar") and usage as the standard of value (to quote Macrorie again, "You wouldn't expect an entomologist to say how beetles *ought* to crawl, but how they do crawl in different situations"). Macrorie's treatment of these matters is barely adequate; the brief space allotted to mechanics hardly allows him to do more than form attitudes and state general

principles, and of concrete analysis of particular syntactic problems there is all too little. Kegel and Stevens are more thorough, more helpful, and incidentally more conservative on particular points. Actually it is a wonder that the writers of these books get as much into them as they do; there is just too much to communication, even if, like Macrorie, we have the courage to damn symmetry and put listening in a subordinate role. In general, and in spite of the poor treatment of grammar, Macrorie would be more congenial to a teacher with the ordinary literary background.

Consideration of these handbooks raises an issue of great practical importance: Is a brief description of the grammar of English even theoretically possible? Apparently at this stage a brief grammar with linguistic orientation is impractical, for everything has to be explained at length and not even the instructor can fill in the gaps. A brief grammar in traditional terms is perfectly possible and at the very least will provide a vocabulary through which instructor and student can communicate, but it will always tend to over-simplification. As for a long grammar of either type, all but the poorest students do not need it, and the poorest may be beyond help. It would be unfortunate if the interest in linguistics should revive the obsession with grammar which most teachers are finally getting over.

Form in Modern English, Dona Worrell Brown, Wallace C. Brown, and Dudley Bailey (Oxford, 1958) certainly raises the issue of length, for it is extended and detailed and given to over-explanation. Its principles are linguistic, but its terminology is traditional; the old terms are used with their old denotations but not their old definitions. The book is clear, orderly, sane, and quite free of linguistic *hybris*. A student could go into it from the traditional grammar without a jar.

A Short Introduction to English Grammar, James Sledd (Scott, Foresman, 1959) possibly does not belong here at all, for the treatment is nearer the graduate than the freshman level. It takes some subtlety of mind to see why, in this system, "chaos" cannot be a noun, nor "beautiful" an adjective, or why a genuine adverb cannot be inflectionally defined. The learning, the

rigorous scientific spirit, the magisterial authority of the author, who has a kind word for Bishop Lowth and dismisses garden-variety linguistic popularizers as persons "whose claims to peculiar wisdom were rather dubious," will doubtless give the *Short Introduction* great influence. When the inevitable vulgarizations appear, we can start worrying about whether the refusal to admit mixed classes does not cause more pedagogical problems than it solves.

The Elements of Style, William Strunk, Jr., revised by E. B. White (Macmillan, 1959) is too short to fit most composition courses but may be attractive for use in some situations. White's status as a published author relieves him of any obligation to be a grammatical scientist, and he can perpetuate Strunk's Johnsonian pronouncements without taking account of the belief "that proper English usage should be determined by a majority vote, as in the elections of the late President Harding and Governor Long of Louisiana" (James Thurber).

Another text which might fit some courses is *Fallacy: The Counterfeit of Argument*, W. Ward Fearnside and William B. Holter (Prentice-Hall, 1959), a book which discusses not merely fallacy in the narrow logical sense but virtually all the tricks of thought and language which the unscrupulous can use to deceive us. It is rather long for a supplementary text, but lively and relatively untechnical.

WORKBOOKS

It is sad to have to report that the workbook continues to be popular. It ought to be passing out of existence, since the old-fashioned humanist always hated it as savoring of machinery, and the modern liberal would almost have to reject it for its associations with drill and black-and-white distinctions. What keeps it alive is partly its appeal to students and teachers hungry for certainty and simple answers in a field which has no simple answers, but mostly the relief it gives to overworked instructors. As classes get more crowded, its use will doubtless be extended, and we can only hope that such books will be as imaginative and flexible as possible.

We tend to think of workbooks as tools for remedial work in grammar, but they show a constant tendency to grow up into handbooks and even to take on the functions of the rhetoric. It would certainly be an economy if workbooks could always be frankly satellites attached to some handbook or other, as some of them already are: Shaw's *Complete Course*, reviewed earlier has an attendant *Workbook for a Complete Course in Freshman English*, Harry Shaw and Dorothy E. Johnson, Fifth Edition (Harper, 1959) which provides not only grammar drill but some helpful exercises on the use of the library. Shaw, however, is the exception among this year's group.

This and the remaining workbooks are generally conservative: that is, they give some version or other of the common-school grammar. There is some tendency to redefine the parts of speech so that the status of a word is always determined by its use in a particular sentence, not by its form or usual use—for instance, a possessive noun or pronoun in such a system may be called an adjective *in the context of a sentence*. But to the confusion of the student, it is always a noun or pronoun again when such matters as inflection and reference are discussed: the classification by function does not after all seem natural to English grammar, and the moment the textbook writer relaxes his vigilance, he slips back into the old categories. In a system which classified rigorously by function one would have to conclude that some nouns may be compared ("The sicker of the two died") and that some adjectives have gender ("His book, her book"). The functionalists, unwilling to carry logic so far, are forced into inconsistencies. Since most of these writers employ the traditional definitions anyway, it would seem best to start with what the word "is" in normal use and go on from there to its functions.

The Sentence in Context: Essentials of Grammar and Rhetoric, Francis Connolly and Donald Sears (Harcourt, Brace, 1959) shows a little of this difficulty (thus a gerund is a noun-substitute on page 25 but a noun on page 31) but is generally notable for its clarity and thoughtfulness. The authors actually seem to understand the rationale of traditional grammar; they not

only define the noun as a "substantive that names" but can explain what this formula means, nor is such an accomplishment to be despised at a time when the old grammar is either sneered at by those who will not understand it or parroted by those who do not realize that there is anything to understand. Note, however, that this is not so much a remedial book as a quality rhetoric in condensed form, unified around the idea of context. To tear out its pages seems almost sacrilegious.

Essentials for English: A Text-workbook, Frances H. Ramsdell, Revised Edition (Scribner's, 1959) solves the problem of torn pages by grouping the exercises at the rear so that at the end of the term the text section will still be intact inside its now oversized cover. The treatment is clear and sound, dignified, and quite conservative. *Essentials of Good English*, James Luneberg (Rinehart, 1959) shows much the same character, with two significant differences. Luneberg's is strictly a remedial book (most workbooks contain a few pages on organization or at least paragraphing) but acquires dignity through the use of exercises in which the sentences, however grotesque in their grammar, form a connected passage. By the time he has straightened out pronoun reference, the student knows the story of the Trojan War ("Aphrodite wore nothing, which was an old Greek custom") and at the end of his struggles with verbs and sentence errors, he will know the life of Napoleon. The same principle is used in *Unified Exercises: An English Grammar and Workbook*, Leonard and Lilian Feinberg (Oxford, 1959), but instead of history we get "anecdotes, riddles, mythology, animal lore" and Spoonerisms—the authors are determined to be entertaining. The treatment of the whole composition is fuller than usual; the grammar is conventional. These last two characteristics also appear in *Basic Skills for Better Writing*, Nick Aaron Ford and Waters Turpin (Putnam's, 1959), a book which shows, however, some originality in the presentation of the parts of speech. *A Basic Guide to Clear and Correct Writing: Form B*, Margaret Walters (Scott, Foresman, 1959) is a sound conservative work, notable for its simplicity and directness and the wealth of examples. *Mechanics of Eng-*

lish: *A Guide to Usage, Vocabulary Building, and Writing*, Merrill B. Sherman (Privately printed, 1958) is a chatty book, ruthlessly thorough and thoroughly reactionary.

Of the workbooks so far discussed, only Connolly and Sears pay any noticeable attention to linguistics. *Introductory College English: Form A*, Hans P. Guth (Rinehart, 1959) undertakes to use the resources of "both traditional grammar and modern linguistics." We might say that the terminology, the framework, and many of the definitions are traditional, but that elements from linguistics are freely used as needed. Although the treatment of punctuation before grammar makes necessary some overlapping and anticipation, the workbook is generally free of the difficulties noted in Guth's rhetoric; for instance, verb classifications and sentence classifications are clearly distinct and both clear.

English Fundamentals: Form B, Don W. Emery and John M. Kierzek, Fourth Edition (Macmillan, 1959) and *Correctness and Precision in Writing: Second Series, Form C*, Phil S. Grant, Frederick Bracher, Samuel E. Duff et al. (Houghton Mifflin, 1959) continue well established and popular series. Both are supposed to minimize theory but show different conceptions of a minimum. Emery and Kierzek actually provide a fairly detailed statement of traditional grammar; they occasionally show the same confusion about function noted earlier, so that *his* is a pronoun on page 8, an adjective on page 9, and a pronoun again in the exercises. *Correctness and Precision* is rather severely limited to the correction of "gross errors" and really does not contain much theory. It gives meaningful and emphatic explanations. Neither book is especially liberal.

Communication Skills: The Basic Course, King Hendricks, Hubert W. Smith, Moyle Q. Rice, and Rex E. Robinson (San Francisco: J. W. Stacey, 1958) is bound like a workbook and furnished with exercises but in other respects most nearly resembles Gerber's *Effective English*, for it combines a communication text, reader, and handbook. Again one wonders how so much can possibly be covered adequately and is struck with admiration at what the authors do accomplish. The reader is quite respec-

table, even somewhat literary, and is supplied with adequate study questions; the handbook is little more than a table of traditional definitions but at least provides a terminology; only the discussion of theme writing struck me as really inadequate. The authors provide a mass of tables, record sheets, assignments, and schedules (on a semester or quarter basis) which should relieve the instructor of much bookkeeping and perhaps of some thinking an ' planning that would have been good for him.

The remaining books are of specialized types. *Consider Your Words*, Charles B. Jennings, Nancy King and Marjorie Stevenson (Harper, 1959) and *English Word Building from Latin and Greek*, W. C. Grummel (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958) are concerned with vocabulary; if one wished to attempt vocabulary building on such a scale, the first is unquestionably more suitable, since the second could hardly be meaningful to a person not already trained in the classical languages. *Learning and Using Words: Advanced Spelling*, James A. Fitzgerald and Patricia G. Fitzgerald (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1959), though hard-bound, may be mentioned here; it is in most respects comparable to Pollock and Baker's *University Spelling Book* but is less logical in its organization. We may just pause to note the publication of an interesting paper-bound *Dictionary of Modern American Synonyms*, Homer Hogan (Paterson: Littlefield, Adams, 1959), which lists and defines recent and popular words not generally found even in very up-to-date general dictionaries.

POSTSCRIPT

I have been asked to notice three books published in 1957 but somehow passed over in previous reviews (their segregation here is entirely on the basis of date and not of quality). *Modern English Workbook*, Robert M. Gorrell and Charlton Laird (Prentice-Hall, 1957) is really a condensed rhetoric in workbook format. There are some ingenious exercises on such matters as organization; apparently the workbook can be made to lend itself to other things besides mechanics. The section on grammar mingles old and new concepts less successfully than the corresponding section of the

authors' handbook; as so often happens in "liberal" books, we get the undeveloped beginnings of a new system mingled with some disjointed fragments of the old. *London in Plague and Fire, 1665-1666*, Roland Bartel (Heath, 1957) is one of the best of the controlled research books; the topic is limited enough to be manageable yet is not narrowly specialized, the events described have historical and literary importance, and the material would serve both for themes

which involve the weighing of evidence and for themes on broader topics. *The University Self-Teaching Dictionary Guide*, Richard Braddock (Rinehart, 1957) must compete with the comparable pamphlets distributed free by dictionary publishers, but, being written from the scholar's rather than the advertising manager's point of view, it is a good deal more satisfactory than such works.

VOCABULARY WORKBOOKS

GEORGE P. WINSHIP, JR.

Professor and Head of Department, King College

Writing of composition texts in the March 1959 issue of *College English*, Professor Cecil B. Williams called attention to the confusion in our profession as to what Freshman Composition is all about. Many of us must agree with him that the diverse aims of the texts on the market indicate "that registrars are accessories to fraud when they record a transferred course as equivalent to a local one." But if handbooks and rhetorics produce this impression, even more disheartening is the very existence of another category, the vocabulary workbook.

These manuals, many of them quite recent, testify to despair. For there is one standard feature of Freshman English courses, to judge by the book trade: they teach writing through reading. In a typical first-semester reader, essays are grouped to catch the student's interest with topics like college life, courtship, and comic-books. As he reads, assisted by guide questions and the instructor, he is expected to absorb patterns of expository or persuasive organization, of paragraph and sentence structure, and of mature idiom. Then he exercises himself in these linguistic patterns by writing themes. Writing is studied through reading, as it has been from the first grade, as it must be.

But how about the basic structures, the words? Surely words, more even than grammatical patterns, are learned in living context. How, except by listening to able

speakers and above all by reading, can anyone acquire a usable stock of words with their connotations, fine distinctions, and idiomatic use? To learn words out of a dictionary can lead only to the classic "Pick up the feline by the narrative and extinguish him."

So it would seem. But our freshmen have studied words in school for a dozen years. And how few they have learned! Like me, most instructors must be appalled by their charges' inefficient reading, poverty of expression, and misuse or malformation of those words they do have the temerity to employ. If asked to read aloud, how many students can manage a quatrain of Housman, let alone a sonnet of Shakespeare, without stumbling over an apparently unfamiliar word? How sincere are their protests, "Oh, sir, I meant that, but I couldn't think how to say it!" And what difficulty they have even with words of high frequency in the Thorndike-Lorge list, indispensable expressions which they form as *beastful, cowardness, and loyalty*.

To teach rhetoric is not enough. They haven't the words to write with. Years of wide reading would do the job, and do it best, but these freshmen need help immediately, lest a large part of their other college work be wasted. In a hundred hours of Freshman Composition we must not only teach architecture but also help these children to mold bricks. Of course we clutch at straw!

These straws are experimental; in the workbooks no single philosophy of word study has emerged. However, most of them include exercises in finding information in the dictionary and interpreting its symbols, though such material is also to be found in most handbooks for Freshman Composition. They also give some attention to words frequently misused (*healthful, respectively, and the like*), though again they may largely duplicate the widely available glossaries. The instructor is more likely to look to a workbook to teach the analysis of derivatives from Greek and Latin, and most vocabulary texts give major space to the common prefixes, suffixes, and roots. There is wide disagreement, however, about whether to present a few dozen of the most common of these or to undertake a course in grammarless Latin.

Less consistently included are other aspects of word study: discrimination of synonyms, levels of diction, and semantic change. Of these the first is quite as important as etymologies to the development of skill in composition, but perhaps no teaching tool can replace wide reading. The instructor may prefer to teach the levels in another way. Semantic change, responsible for much difficulty in reading literature and the older standard reference works in many subjects, belongs with the history of the language. A few workbooks appeal to those instructors—I am one—who use language history in order to enliven vocabulary study and to give it some general principles. Other teachers may consider history extraneous.

Most of these workbooks provide material for at least fifteen weekly assignments; a few appear to be designed for a full semester's course in vocabulary alone. These would be useful for private study by an ambitious student.

Several vocabulary workbooks for college use are discussed first, in reverse order of publication. For comparison, a few home-study books are considered. A staple of trade publishing, these fall outside of our country, but a geographer should trace his frontiers.

COLLEGE TEXTS

(1) James I. Brown and Rachel Salisbury, *Building a Better Vocabulary* (Ronald,

1959, 124 pp., \$2.25). With more than 90 tests and exercises, embracing over 1300 vocabulary items in addition to numerous drills on spelling and the like, this manual is estimated by its authors to require 75 hours of work from the student, who can check his exercises by an included key. The student should be unusually ambitious or thoroughly scared. Professor Brown (Minnesota), on the basis of an analysis of every word in the *Collegiate*, has built an ingenious table of only fourteen words whose parts provide clues to the meaning of 100,000 others. In all, about 250 word elements are taught in 26 pages of drill. With Miss Salisbury (formerly of Wisconsin State at Milwaukee) he has compiled a broad range of exercises, mostly of very high quality, on synonyms, antonyms, and the use of the thesaurus. In keeping with their principle of encouraging self-study, they include detailed discussions of the psychology of learning and many hints about method. On the other hand, while psychology is recognized as a science with unifying principles, language is not. Aspects of word study which have linguistic interest, like semantic change, are passed over; and combining forms like *psycho-* and *stereo-* are listed as "prefixes" because they may be found as initial syllables. It may be objected that the word *prefix* is mistaught. If the instructor agrees that linguistic information is a luxury, and if he is able to frighten his students into long and tedious independent study, he will find here an abundance of helpful material.

(2) Charles B. Jennings, Nancy King, and Marjorie Stevenson, *Consider Your Words* (Harper, 1959, 172 pp., \$1.75). Attractively printed in large type, this manual offers full and helpful advice on the selection and use of a dictionary, the organization of a vocabulary notebook, and so on; it is evidently designed for class rather than independent use, probably with a slow or remedial section. The words selected for study, however, are sometimes rare or technical. Most valuable are the lists of affixes systematically classified by language and meaning, associating *hypo-*, *sub-*, and *under-* as synonyms, *hypo-* and *hyper-* as antonyms, and *a-*, *ex-*, and *in-* as prefixes with more than one meaning. These authors consistently regard language as an

entity in itself, worthy of further study, to which they invite the student by a bibliography of reference works and a chapter on the history of English. (The latter is not remarkably accurate or up-to-date.) There are several pages of exercises on commonly misused words and a valuable section on the discrimination of parts of speech. The material is not too extensive for a semester's supplementary assignments. In general the workbook is intelligently planned for use in class by an instructor interested in language as such, but the writing of the exercises shows less care than the organization of the whole.

(3) Samuel C. Monson, *Word Building* (Macmillan, 1958, 153 pp., \$2.00). Of more limited scope than many vocabulary drill-books, this offers 30 exercises, of about 20 items each, almost entirely devoted to the analysis of words of classical origin. The roots and affixes, some 300, are listed at the end, as seems desirable, though the words of the exercises are not. The abundant material and the somewhat technical exposition (on semantic change, for example) commend this book for use with average or well-prepared sections of college English. It does not attempt directly to correct habitual misuses of common words or to discriminate levels of formality. Methods of inferring meaning from context are treated briefly; *verbum sap*. Exposition of the dictionary is handled efficiently by the inclusion of reproductions of sample pages. Professor Monson (Brigham Young) presents roots by language and affixes by semantic classes: diminutive suffixes, negative and reversing prefixes, for example. This is a physically attractive well-written handbook for those students requiring only the work with classical word elements promised in the title.

(4) Donald W. Lee, *Harbrace Vocabulary Guide* (Harcourt, Brace, 1956, 122 pp., \$1.50). Containing 75 exercises in 13 chapters, with more than 2500 items for drill, this *Guide* could serve as the backbone of a semester course in vocabulary. I have found it unwieldy on a fifteen-assignment schedule, for there are many excellent exercises that I hate to omit. They are not keyed for home study. A clear, compact history of the English language introduces the sections on roots and affixes, and other

chapters deal in a mature fashion with semantic change, figurative language, and levels of diction. The mechanics of the dictionary are treated briefly, and good study habits are taken for granted; this book should be used by an instructor who considers language important in itself and who feels able to interest his students in it. Two features given unusual stress by Lee (Pittsburgh) are the warning against false or misleading etymologizing of words which exhibit a familiar syllable, and the very extensive drill (over 400 items) in the use of suffixes in formation of specified derivatives. In these latter exercises he attacks a major problem of undergraduate writing. The remainder of this excellent book appears to have been constructed for fairly mature students, such as the upper half of many college freshman classes, and the question might arise whether these able people can afford so many hours as would be required for such vocabulary drill. Surprisingly, it is available also in a secondary-school edition, *Harbrace Vocabulary Workshop*, prepared in collaboration with Paul Schweitzer (Bronx High School of Science); the explanatory chapters are somewhat simplified, but the exercises are very similar. The *Workshop* has an added chapter on words in context and a separate pamphlet of tests (28 pp.).

(5) J. E. Norwood, *Concerning Words and Phrasing*, 4th ed., with readings and added exercises by Margaret Inman Meaders (Prentice-Hall, 1956, 116 pp., \$1.95). First published in 1938, *Concerning Words* provides thorough notes on the range of meaning of about 70 affixes and 50 stems, and teaches through context and exercises well over a thousand literary polysyllables. There is commendable attention to such matters as the development of figurative meanings in a word's history. A remarkable feature of this edition is Miss Meaders' serial story, embodying the words under study in a series of letters and journal entries by a young man and woman for whom the path of love is not smooth but not far from corny. The context is artificial, because the vocabulary is altogether inappropriate to such writing, but with the accompanying exercises on many of the same words it provides enough repetition to make the words stick. Although the av-

erage student will receive little help with the words already half-naturalized in his vocabulary ("the party turned into a mayhem"), if he avoids imitating the readings he can use some of his new words in his writing and all of them in his reading. On the whole, the workbook is reasonably well adapted to the composition course, and with energetic teaching it can be covered in fifteen assignments.

(6) William D. Baker, *The Sound of English: A Diction and Usage Drillbook* (Prentice-Hall, 1955, 94 pp., \$1.75). This combines vocabulary study with drill on the common errors in student writing. There are two exercises to introduce each list of words and then two more on agreement, the comma splice, or the like, which employ the words correctly; the errors are elsewhere. With such intensive repetition a high degree of retention may be expected. It is unfortunate that with so promising a scheme Professor Baker (Buffalo) has offered sentences like "Please let me know (who, whom) the most covetous person is." It is also unfortunate that some of the matching exercises turn out to contain paired items that are not in the same part of speech. There are other mistakes. The words, only 200, are introduced in groups either of near-synonyms or of words often confused by careless readers: *epithet*, *epitaph*, *epigram*. All are quite common, having been checked for frequency against the Thorndike-Lorge *Teacher's Word Book*. There is a welcome index. It may be objected that some synonyms are so close that the distinctions are of small value to the student: *inspect*, *scrutinize*, *examine*. This drillbook appears to be valuable for remedial sections and especially for foreign students. In fact, it presents English to the student much as French or German is presented, with paragraphs of good prose to read aloud and sample sentences in sound idiom at the head of each correction exercise on non-standard constructions. To many native speakers, one must admit, literary English is a foreign tongue. Even with the compact, frugal, thrifty, almost niggardly format (allowing little room for required corrections), it should be a most valuable teaching tool.

(7) C. Rexford Davis, *Vocabulary Building* (Henry Holt, succeeding William

Sloane, 1951, 208 pp., \$2.25). To help slow readers with seriously deficient vocabularies to survive in college, Professor Davis (Rutgers) has devised a manual presenting several hundred Latin and Greek words (rather than roots) together with many suffixes. For prefixes the student is referred to the dictionary. The assignments cover over a thousand words; and an appendix, including those words whose meaning is not readily inferred from their elements, includes nearly 4000. It looks rather like a head-on attack on Webster, somewhat in the manner of acquiring an education by reading an encyclopedia, but this approach is deliberate. To quote the preface, "Students of low vocabulary comprehension are often such slow readers that any attempt at markedly increasing their vocabularies by the study of words in context is inevitably frustrated." A similar objection might be made to any historical, semantic, or stylistic organization; but without coherent content such formidable lists as these, which would require many hours of a semester, must be dull to study and duller to teach.

Very commendable is a form of quiz question employed in this book and in two 150-item tests printed separately (20¢ each). An example:

To allow as a discount

a. rebate b. retrench c. accrue d. detract

In consideration of your large order, I will

_____ you ten percent. ,

(8) Edward Jones Kilduff and J. Harold Janis, *Knowing and Using Words* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948, 143 pp., \$2.00). One of the older competitors in the field, this workbook is built on principles that deserve imitation. Kilduff and Janis aim at a usable vocabulary, not merely a large one. Three exercises on misused words and seven on synonyms are valuable, and such problems as that of the advertiser seeking an acceptable way to say "cheap" are intelligently presented. But unlike some texts of forbidding bulk, this is skimpy. Its 35 exercises are rather short, much of the best material duplicates that in many handbooks or does not exceed it enough to justify the

purchase of a workbook, and the classical derivatives (from 40 roots and 55 affixes) are given very cursory treatment in three exercises. The chapters designed to motivate the student are well written but long, at the expense of practice material. The advice on pronunciation and on selectivity in learning new words is excellent. There is some treatment of the history of the language, together with bibliographies (now outdated) of books on words. Finally there is a list, overlapping the exercise material, of 1000 words recommended for study. The publishers offer for 65 cents a pocket *Vocabulary Builder Notebook*.

(9) Richard D. Mallery, *Workbook for English Vocabulary Building* (Heath, 1948, 99 pp., \$1.50). A half-dozen paragraphs of standard prose supply words in context for the first few lessons, so that dictionary study is introduced in a natural and meaningful way. There are long lists of word elements, some 137 affixes and 228 "roots"—most of them not roots but words in the Latin, Greek, or Old English form. This is the more surprising in that Professor Mallery (NYU) does not introduce the history of the language. Many of the exercises seem rather casually composed and difficult to score: for example, "Demonstrate your understanding of each of the following words by using it in a sentence." Any instructor can set such tasks without buying a special book! Other exercises on synonyms are commendable, however; there is no attempt to teach a discrimination too nice for able professional writers. In sum: while this book offers sufficient material for a semester's supplementary drill, it shows that workbook building has come a long way since 1948.

SELF-HELP VOCABULARY BUILDERS

Of the countless "trade" publications about words I shall mention very few. The first has been advertised to the college market.

(1) Frieda Radke, *Word Resources* (Odyssey, 1955, 244 pp., \$2.20). Hard-bound, though competitive in price with practice-pad workbooks, this is designed for home study. Answers are provided for many of the 187 exercises and tests. The exercises are widely varied in form, some

making good use of context; others, of a kind easy to compose but tedious to solve, are lists up to 25 words long to be matched with definitions (sometimes they run to the verso of the page!) Almost all of the standard approaches are used, even the history of the language (perfunctory, with stress on words like *boycott* and *wigwam*). Word formation is explained well, with about 50 roots; but it is not taught thoroughly enough to justify the assumption, in a later section on spelling, that the student can now understand when to double consonants in *disappoint* and *recommend*. On the other hand, the treatment of synonyms and antonyms is very full and very useful.

About 2500 words are introduced. Few are rare; most belong in the active vocabulary of college freshmen or of high-school seniors (for whom the book may have been first devised). Exceptions are in lists of legal, medical, and artistic terms. Perhaps to study the meanings of 92 legal terms will save someone a costly error, unless he supposes himself acquainted with law and trips on the 93rd. It seems wiser to learn technical words in a substantial context. The vocabularies for literature and the fine arts are harmful to appreciation if anything.

With the exceptions noted, the word-stock may be commended as reaching below the theoretical college level to that on which many students actually are. The volume may be useful to the unschooled adult. But the college instructor is likely to prefer tear-out sheets with fewer and more carefully constructed exercises.

The last publications are unlikely to be considered for college use, but in certain respects they might well be emulated by college textbook writers. All are inexpensive paperbacks.

(2) Wilfred Funk and Norman Lewis, *30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary* (Pocket Books, 1942, 221 pp.)

(3) Norman Lewis, *Word Power Made Easy: The Complete Three-Week Vocabulary Builder* (Permabooks, 1949, 457 pp.)

(4) Wilfred Funk, *Six Weeks to Words of Power* (Pocket Books, 1953, 294 pp.)

These are addressed to adults for home study, and there is some indication that the model customer is Jay Gatsby. The pitch

is, "Are you frustrated? Research has proved that nine out of ten executives have large vocabularies. Here is the magic carpet to affluence (AFF-loo-ents)!" Aimed at the ill-educated and insecure (it is significant that the first week of Lewis's three-week course deals largely with medical and psychological terms), these books stress glamorous "words of power," words that will advertise abroad that one has been studying a vocabulary book. And they epitomize features of the self-help genre that college instructors hate. One is the Hollywood diet in reverse: put on intellectual weight in a hurry. We believe that it takes either ten or fifteen weeks to learn anything! Another is the deliberately loose organization with headings like "Nouns We Often Forget," which may give the private reader a cozy feeling but which will set a bad example to students who are simultaneously writing themes.

On the other hand, these books are in some ways more thoughtfully constructed than many of the college workbooks. For example, *Word Power Made Easy* is built around 13 lists, each of ten words associated in meaning. Each word is introduced by a discussion of its meaning, pronunciations are given, and then the list is drilled, drilled, and drilled. There follows for each word a chatty discussion of its stem and affixes which introduces a number of derived or related words; then these new words are drilled with the same thoroughness. Anyone who follows this rigorous program will be unlikely to forget all of the 600 words or so he has studied. Interspersed between the lists of hard words are shorter chapters on grammar, spelling, pronunciation, and troublesome expressions.

Dr. Funk's *Six Weeks*, like his familiar feature in the *Reader's Digest*, presents vocabulary drill in varied, interesting, and relatively undemanding quizzes. There is a less systematic treatment of etymology than by Lewis, but this book would probably be followed further by the half-motivated. It treats about 500 words with some thoroughness, mentions others, indexes them all. College instructors would be wise to gather these little manuals from a newsstand and to observe their full and interesting explanations of meaning, their use of context, and their repetitive drill.

ADVANCED COMPOSITION: EXERCISE

JOHN FANDEL

Instructor, Manhattan College

Define: rain
on stone;
Explain.

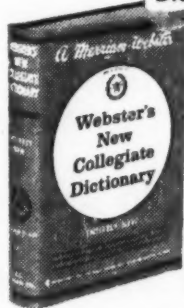
Tell
how a leaf
fell;
Be brief.

Describe: wind
in the trees;
Prescind
from these,
in tone

with the image, the word,
what you saw-heard-
smelled-tasted . . . the touch
of. *Is*, you will find, is much
more, different
from meant.

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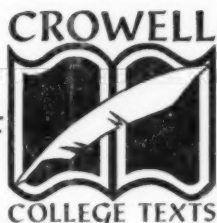
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